

Lincoln Center: A Case Study
Resolving the Conflict Between Preservation,
Maintenance and Redevelopment
of the
American Postwar Performing Arts Center

by

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PREFACE

The subject of this thesis evolved out of a project I started in late June 2001 for Landmark West!, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Manhattan's Upper West Side. Having been asked by Arlene Simon, the organization's president, to write the National Register Nomination of Lincoln Center, I accepted, anticipating a herculean task ahead of me. Since that time, I have eaten, breathed and slept Lincoln Center in an effort to comprehend and document its multi-faceted significance.

But beyond historic preservation, there are other reasons for my interest. Between 1994 and 1998, I worked for the biographer, Donald Spoto, with whom I had the privilege of experiencing the center's magnificent cultural offerings firsthand. Not many research assistants can lay claim to having attended the opera, symphony, theater and ballet at Lincoln Center, but working for Donald, I was happily exposed to all four. My appreciation of these buildings as performance spaces, and now more recently, as significant works of their time, has made me all the more curious as to how they, and others like them, can thrive in the 21st century without sacrificing the elements that give them their remarkable—and sometimes, bewildering—sense of place.

In addition, as the son of an artist in California who was creating works of his own during the postwar era, I have a personal fascination with the evolution of arts appreciation in the United States during this time, and how Lincoln Center fostered that vision. In May 1963, my father had his vernissage at a friend's home in Beverly Hills, which turned out, at the time, to be the largest private exhibition to have ever

taken place in that city's history. Although the President and First Lady were not able to come (Letitia Baldrige conveyed their regrets), other distinguished guests did, thereby launching my father's international career as a fine artist. Since then, his impressionist paintings—largely evocative of Chagall's work at the Metropolitan Opera House—have filled my days with color and light.

It is to him that I dedicate this thesis.

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Many individuals on- and off- campus assisted me in this project by offering their experience, wisdom and insight. Under the able direction of head librarian, Kitty Chibnik, Columbia's Avery Library continues to flourish as one of the great architectural research facilities in the world. Avery's staff was always quick to respond to my questions and pointed me in the right direction when my needs were beyond the scope of their holdings. My thanks also to the staff at the Rockefeller Foundation Archives, who were eager to assist me, and made my brief visit to their facility productive.

Within the public sector, I received valuable counsel from New York State Historic Preservation Officer, Julian Adams. In addition to responding to my phone calls and e-mails with promptness and alacrity, Julian also faxed me important documents, as well as referred me to some of his colleagues on the federal level. At the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, I got answers to crucial questions from representatives, Martha Catlin and Druscilla Null. My former colleague, Gina Santucci, at the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission offered useful information regarding appropriate regulatory agencies to contact. Similarly, Joe Mulany, at the office of Housing and Urban Development, was helpful in explaining the mechanics of preservation policies as they relate to urban renewal projects. At the General Services Administration, Columbia Historic Preservation alumna, Caroline Alderson, guided me to important documents pertaining to her agency's redevelopment efforts. Working in the private, non-profit sector, Tom Reynolds at the

Cooper-Hewitt Museum dissected the complexities of the Smithsonian Institution, which allowed me to understand the anomalous organizational structure of the Kennedy Center.

I was particularly fortunate early on in my research to be able to talk to professionals associated with both the preservation and redevelopment efforts at Lincoln Center. With the assistance of Columbia Historic Preservation alumna, Kirsten Moffett, I was given the opportunity to interview Lincoln Center Constituent Development Project, Inc.'s Executive Director, Rebecca Robertson. Both Rebecca and her project associate, C. Adair Smith, were kindly forthcoming in detailing the many issues confronting the center's facilities and public spaces. Several months later, I had the privilege of hosting Rebecca and Adair for a class presentation, and they provided further clarification regarding the center's issues.

One of my first phone calls was to Columbia preservation program alumnus, Kyle Normandin, who was not only generous with his own time and experience to discuss material issues at the center, but also put me in contact with Beyer Blinder Belle architect, Andrew Berlinger. Like Kyle, Andrew was a major asset to this project by not only giving of his time—a tireless four hours of discussion following his workday!—but also relevant drawings, outlining the complexities of each building and public area. Similarly, Paul Goldberger found time within his busy schedule as architectural critic for *The New Yorker* and guest lecturer, to make himself available to me for an interview. Having written several articles on Lincoln Center since 1979, I expected him to be an authority on its urbanistic successes and failings—and his observations confirmed my expectations.

I could not have undertaken this project without the endorsement and assistance of Arlene Simon and Kate Wood. Presiding over Landmark West! with the efficiency and energy of a well-oiled preservation machine, Arlene and Kate resounded with encouragement when I broached the idea of incorporating some of my research for the nomination of Lincoln Center into a thesis project. Having provided me with an exhaustive amount of archival material and photos pertaining to the center, as well as allowing me to use additional research which I had culled on my own for the nomination, Arlene and Kate have been invaluable assets to this project. They also facilitated introductions to Columbia Preservation alumni, John Krawchuk and Kathleen Randall. John offered me his insight on the Lincoln Square area, and Kathleen provided me with counsel and source material to support the nomination, having undertaken an analysis of her own in her masters thesis from 1992. Kathleen has been equally supportive of my thesis undertaking, and I am indebted to her for her encouragement, advice and allowing me to use relevant archival material for this project as well. The redevelopment of Lincoln Center is almost as popular a news story as the rebuilding effort at Ground Zero, and my vigilant classmates, Melissa Baldock and Rena Sichel Rosen, were quick to notify me upon discovering the latest twist or turn in the ongoing Lincoln Center saga.

On-campus, I would like to acknowledge the faculty at Columbia who helped guide this project to completion. In the Real Estate Development Program, both Michael Buckley and Hank Bell welcomed my ideas, while offering a few of their own as to the direction this thesis should take. My meeting with John Alschuler proved to be one of my most informative interviews, as he detailed many of the center's failings,

particularly from an organizational standpoint. In the preservation program, Paul Byard e-mailed me his comments following a review that certainly pushed me toward the formulation of a cohesive thesis outline. His book has been a particular source of inspiration for this project. Martin Weaver was an exceptionally enthusiastic ally who made some of the more complex conservation issues concerning travertine and granite at Lincoln Center comprehensible, and lent me important findings on the subject. Dorothy Miner offered her invaluable time and experience to me, as she explained the intricacies of Section 106 and the various ways in which it can be triggered. She, too, was quick to lend me important books from her own personal library on preservation policies abroad. Paul Bentel initiated a stimulating dialogue regarding the formalist style and Beaux Arts planning ideals, as well as led me to some relevant books and articles.

Regarding my readers and advisors, I have been well-served in all respects. Andrew Dolkart has given generously of his time with the editing of the designation report, which in turn has left its imprint on this project. Having already benefited from Tony Wood's counsel last year on her own thesis project, Kate Wood told me that Tony "knows the right questions to ask." Sure enough, he carefully probed my arguments, and then suggested constructive ways to make them stronger. My real estate advisor, Robert Paley conveyed useful findings from his experience working in the public sector, particularly in his discussion of public-private ventures and the types of entities which should oversee them. His class was especially useful in understanding the complexities of these types of developments. Theo Prudon advised me for the Historic Preservation Program, translating his passion for the modern

movement into sound advice regarding its preservation. Confident that I could deliver a cohesive thesis while not necessarily agreeing with all of my ideas, Theo's input has been crucial to this process, giving me the opportunity to sound out new ideas within a context of reason and plausibility.

Finally, I want to acknowledge two people who have had a particular impact on my life, professionally and personally: my friend, Julianne Polanco, and my partner, Robert Saint-Vil, Jr. I met Juli several years ago when a mutual friend suggested I talk to her about Columbia's preservation program. At the time, Juli was in the middle of her second year, yet, in spite her hectic schedule, spoke to me extensively about it and the field—eventually affirming my decision to go back to school. Since that time, she has been a constant source of inspiration to me with her acute instinct, intelligence and perseverance. She is a loyal person through and through, and has remained supportive throughout my academic and professional journey.

Robert and I have been together for four years now, and I am the better for it. Currently enrolled in his second year of medical school in southern New Jersey, he has been immersed in study as only a med student can be. Yet, in spite of the ongoing demands of his own program, he has been a stabilizing force in my life, shuttling back and forth on weekends between his place and mine. His arrivals and departures are bittersweet as they signal the comfort of his presence that only the end of the week can bring—and the heartache from his absence, as another week begins anew. I take solace in knowing that each departure inevitably brings another visit, and I thank Robert for coming home to me again and again and again.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the American postwar performing arts center is in a precarious position. No longer considered the ultimate destination for culture, many of these complexes have been derided for their outmoded technology and alienating designs. In fact, a survey of some of the nation's most notable postwar performing arts centers reveals efforts on the part of their stewards to drastically alter their facilities in order to upgrade them structurally, technologically and cosmetically—while also reversing ill-conceived planning ideals of the past.¹ Since some of these campuses were products of urban renewal, the need to employ sensible and sound urbanistic designs is even more acute, as landlords of these public-private ventures now attempt to atone for the decimation of entire working-class communities.

Yet, despite these past and present ills, these performing arts campuses merit appreciation. Bold experiments in centralizing the arts, and subsequent embodiments of the postwar era, they signaled a national movement to make the performing arts a more compelling part of the American experience. Furthermore, they represented a determination by public and private sectors—particularly in New York and Washington, D.C.—to mobilize in an effort to make the United States a contender in the international cultural arena. While these goals may or may not have been ultimately realized, the American postwar performing arts center nevertheless occupies a significant place of exceptional importance within the context of the country's cultural history.

Now, nearly half a century old, these complexes face stiffer competition from both historic, upgraded performance venues, and more contemporary, state-of-the-art facilities. In addition, now, more than ever, they are having to compete with more popular attractions, such as movies, commercial theaters, malls, clubs—and cable, videos and DVDs. Responding to the competition, many stewards of these postwar facilities are implementing renovation plans that threaten to undermine the character and pervasive sense of place offered by these centers. Consequently, postwar performance venues, which previously relied on a critically-acclaimed presentation and a cohesively dominating presence to draw patrons, are now being robbed of some of their most distinctive elements. Manifested in proposals for glass additions, plaza enclosures and drastic alterations to modern landscapes, these proposals signify dramatic attempts to undo and obliterate historically significant details. While these alterations may in fact create novel destinations, questions remain as to how they will surpass their originals in terms of being effective generators of income.

It is within this context that this thesis will explore how the conflicts between preservation, maintenance and redevelopment of the American postwar performing arts center can be reconciled. Confronted with the prospect of significant alterations and new construction, this thesis will investigate ways of preserving character-defining elements of these cultural centers, while employing an expanded criterion based on utility and intent. Using existing regulatory mechanisms, previously enacted by federal and state legislation, this thesis will also demonstrate how the American postwar performing arts center can be protected as an historic resource.

Following these proposals for significance and protection, this thesis will probe the extent to which program justifies change, and the ways in which change can be introduced without compromising overall significance. Using Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts as its case study, this thesis will examine central issues to its current redevelopment proposal, including those pertaining to design, planning, public space, materials and new development, in an effort to ascertain what alterations are appropriate and inappropriate within a preservation context. Bearing in mind that these non-profit organizations and their parent institutions have a mission to offer the highest standards of music, opera, dance, theater and arts education amidst publicly-owned settings, this thesis will focus on the appropriateness of program as a means of balancing private interests of economic viability with public interests of preservation, program and accessibility.



1. Proposed Plan for Lincoln Center, West 65th Street & Broadway, looking west.



2. Proposed Plan for Los Angeles Music Center, Grand Avenue, looking north.
 Altoon + Porter Architects. Frank Gehry Disney Hall in left foreground.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Some of these proposals include Lincoln Center's master plan to add onto its existing facilities, green its plaza areas, and possibly demolish and rebuild Avery Fisher Hall; the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' ongoing 10-year master plan to perform a gut rehabilitation of its opera house, after having already done so to its concert hall; and the Los Angeles Music Center's plan to lower its plaza, build a reception pavilion on it, and connect it to City Hall to the east and the imminent Disney Hall to the south. LAMC has already removed a section of the columnar arcade that runs between the Mark Taper Forum and the newly reconfigured and refurbished Ahmanson Theater.

CHAPTER 1

THE CASE FOR EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE

The National Agenda for a Cultural Center

The idea of an American cultural center is almost as old as the country itself. In 1789, architect Pierre L'Enfant had proposed such a complex to George Washington when he presented his ideas for a capital city.¹ As part of his plan, L'Enfant proposed a "Presidential Palace," comprised of "play houses, rooms of assembly, academies and all such sort of places as may be attractive to the learned and afford diversion to the idle."² However, L'Enfant's "palace," dedicated to culture and other activities, was never realized due to a lack of funding. Instead, the city's forefathers relied on a succession of individual, multi-use theaters and assembly halls to accommodate all of their cultural needs.

In August 1800, one month after the federal government had relocated to Washington, D.C., the United States Theater opened within Samuel Blodgett's Great Hotel on the north side of E Street, N.W. between 7th and 8th Streets.³ Thirty-five years later, the National Theater replaced the United States Theater, and although it continued to offer legitimate plays and musical performances until 1948, it was deemed insufficient for larger presentations. In 1883, the newly-constructed War Memorial Building, located at 4th and F Streets, N.W., offered an enormous central hall that subsequently became the site of inaugural balls for Presidents Grover S.

Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft, accommodating up to 18,000 people.

By 1913, Congress had proposed building a 6,000 seat auditorium to be named in honor of George Washington. Although a design was agreed upon, like Enfant's proposal, it was never built due to a lack of financial support. Instead, the privately-funded Washington Auditorium was built ten years later at 19th Street and New York Avenue and could seat up to 4,000 patrons. However, this auditorium was converted into a government office building nearly ten years after it was built. Responding to the need for a multi-cultural facility, the Daughters of the American Revolution built Constitution Hall in 1929, which remained the capital's dominant concert hall over the next forty-two years.

Pierre L'Enfant's vision for a cultural center was revived during the Depression in 1935, when the House Patents Committee, responding to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's idea to construct a National Theater, proposed a Department of Science, Art and Literature building on Capitol Hill, adjacent to the Supreme Court building. In its proposal, the committee recommended four 2,500-seat theaters: one each for music, drama, grand opera and children's theater.⁴ After Congress rejected its proposal, the House Patents Committee resubmitted it to the District Commission as the Federal Academy of Arts of the Stage. However, this submission was also rejected and the committee's Federal Academy was never built.⁵

Between 1937 and 1950, various congressmen and private individuals introduced initiatives for federally-funded halls or theaters that were all subsequently denied. However, on January 18, 1954, following an unsuccessful initiative in which

he had proposed a National War Memorial Theater and Opera House, Representative Charles D. Howell (D., NJ) submitted a revised version in which he urged the establishment of an American National War Memorial Arts Commission “to encourage the arts throughout the country, and provide Federal grants to states to develop state arts programs and projects.”⁶ Concurrently, similar bills were introduced by Representatives Richard Bolling (D., MO) and Lee Metcalf (D., MT).⁷

On June 8, 1954, nine witnesses testified in favor of Representatives Howell, Bolling and Metcalf’s bills before the Bosch Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, giving their endorsement of federal aid to states for fine arts subsidy, as well as the creation of a national theater and opera house to be housed in the nation’s capitol.⁸ Although the bills did not receive a majority vote, they did engender support from a president who was intent on launching an arts campaign of his own that same summer. Concerned with the lack of visual and performing arts being exported overseas in contrast to Russia’s profusion of subsidized artistic exports, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had already convinced Congress to appropriate 2.5 million dollars to the U.S. Information Agency to finance American cultural presentations abroad.⁹ Months later, *U.S. News & World Report* reported in its January 28, 1955 edition that the President was urging Congress to establish a Federal Advisory Commission on the Fine Arts.¹⁰

One of the central issues motivating the President and other elected officials in their pursuit of a more prominent arts agenda related to America’s competition with Russia during the Cold War, and the federal government’s determination to eliminate

any negative perceptions of America's image overseas. Reporting on the President's initiatives, *U.S. News & World Report* wrote:

Reports from U.S. officials overseas have stirred the President, as well as many Congressmen. The Russians are sending singers, dancers, musicians, actors and arts exhibitions to places all over Europe and Latin America. The Soviet Government foots the bill...The Russian artists are reported to be making a deep impression and American prestige, the reports add, suffers in proportion. The Russians picture Americans as gum-chewing barbarians. They spread the idea that the United States might excel in science and industry, but it has no art worth showing.¹¹

Eisenhower's plan—consistent with the congressmen's bills—envisioned an arts commission that would recognize significant American artists; recommend subsidies for orchestras, opera companies, art schools and galleries; award scholarships to artists, writers and liberal arts students; and establish a national cultural center in Washington, D.C.¹² The latter was to be comprised of "an opera house or theater, a presidential inaugural auditorium, an art gallery and studios for the study and teaching of art."¹³ Although it would take two presidential administrations before these plans would receive congressional approval, they did reflect an increasing interest in the arts among the American population.

By the mid-1950s, in addition to Cold War politics, domestic trends began to significantly influence Americans' attitudes toward the arts. While some articles, such as the one quoted, conveyed the country's cultural inferiority in contrast to its European counterparts, others touted Americans' growing interest in classical music, theater, art and literature.¹⁴ Much of this newfound enthusiasm could be attributed to

the swelling population, accessibility of higher education, unprecedented leisure time and increased wealth. By 1958, the population had surged to 172.8 million from 122.8 million in 1930, with college students numbering approximately 3 million.¹⁵ Furthermore, the average work week, which had formerly been 50 hours a week in 1929, had been reduced to 39 hours a week, while the average American's income had tripled.¹⁶

In February 1958, countering European stereotypes that Americans were materialistically obsessed, *Newsweek* magazine released a study showing that the country's citizens had become the world's largest consumers of culture.¹⁷ Supporting its claim, the study noted that more than 55 million Americans attended museums and art galleries a year; the number of American symphony orchestras had jumped from 732 before World War II to 1,055 after; and Americans had spent an estimated \$133 million on classical recordings.¹⁸ The explanation for such widespread interest—beyond the statistical data concerning population growth, educational access, expanded leisure time and wealth—included a quest for self-enlightenment, a yearning for stability and a challenge to the elitism of the past. *Newsweek's* study noted that "Sociologists view the current drive to attain culture also as a grasping for firm, tradition-backed values on the part of people increasingly unsettled by the state of the world; and, finally, as a reaching for snobbish, prestige-giving activities which were once monopolized by the 'leisure classes.'"¹⁹ Substantially influenced by Europe and able to afford activities which heretofore had been cost-prohibitive, the article concluded, "The class market finally became a mass market."²⁰

Despite this national focus on the arts during the late 1950s, construction on the federally-sponsored cultural center in Washington, D.C. did not begin until a decade later. Owing to location, funding and control issues, the President, Congress and interested citizens continued to debate these logistics in the interim, while other major cities began developing plans for their own cultural complexes.²¹

An American Postwar Model Is Born

In 1945, several women's groups in the Milwaukee area, led by a former music and drama critic, proposed a World War II memorial to "honor the dead by serving the living" in the form of a cultural center that would "symbolize some of the finer aspects of the things for which our men were fighting."²² Enlisting an umbrella civic organization to aid them in their quest, together they formed a non-profit alliance in July 1945 called the Metropolitan War Memorial, Inc. Intent on creating a series of auditoriums that would house "art, music, drama, public discussion and social assembly," the organization commissioned David S. Geer of the notable firm of Saarinen and Swanson to create a master plan.²³ Geer's preliminary design entailed a 1200-seat Veterans Memorial Hall, a 3500-seat concert hall, and 1500- and 500-seat theaters. However, like the proposal for the nation's capital, the Milwaukee complex was plagued with delays, owing primarily to disagreements regarding its location. Finally, in January 1953, a site at the Lincoln Memorial Bridge was chosen, and architect Eero Saarinen was assigned to the job that both Geer and Eero's father, Eliel, had previously worked on. In July 1957, two years after construction had begun, the assembly hall, known as the Milwaukee County War Memorial, and its adjacent plaza opened.

Several months later, in September 1957, the center's art museum opened with a dedication ceremony presided over by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 1963, architect Harry Weese unveiled his design for a self-contained performing arts center in accordance with Geer's original war memorial plan, containing one large multi-use auditorium, two mid-sized theaters and an outdoor pavilion. In September 1969, the campus, consisting of a black granite plaza and flame, the Milwaukee County War Memorial and the self-contained Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, was complete. Planned just as World War II was ending, this complex was the first postwar performing arts center.²⁴

Lincoln Center

In spite of its precedence, Milwaukee's war memorial could not overshadow the grandiose scheme which was slowly unfolding in New York. Planned to rival the great urban squares of Europe, New York City's Lincoln Center was undisputedly the largest project in the United States ever undertaken to house the performing arts. Spearheaded by the now legendary juggernaut of urban renewal, Robert Moses, in 1955, it evolved out of the Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Area Project.²⁵ Using Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949, Moses, acting on his authority as chairman of New York City's Slum Clearance Committee, sought to revitalize what he deemed Manhattan's "dismal and decayed West Side," located between West 60th and 70th Streets, between Broadway and West End Avenue, by obliterating the area's existing building stock, and replacing it with new construction.²⁶ In accordance with his plan of economic revitalization for Lincoln Square, Moses proposed middle-income apartment houses, a hotel skyscraper, a ten-story office building for the fashion

industry, a new headquarters for the Engineering Society, a branch of the Fordham University campus and an opera house for the Metropolitan Opera Company.²⁷

While the plan for a new Metropolitan Opera House was subordinate in Moses' original scheme, it was the opera organization's association with the project that significantly altered its direction.

In early 1955, the Philharmonic-Symphony Society learned that its lease on Carnegie Hall, home to the New York Philharmonic since 1891, would not be renewed once it had expired in 1959.²⁸ Furthermore, because Carnegie Hall's owners had experienced an inadequate return on their property, they had plans to demolish it and erect an office building in its place. Responding to this dire news, the Philharmonic board immediately sought counsel to acquire an alternative site to construct a new symphony hall. The Philharmonic-Symphony Society's director, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., a friend of famed Rockefeller Center associate architect and lead coordinator of the United Nations Headquarters, Wallace K. Harrison, appealed to the designer for suggestions. Harrison, who had been working on a series of proposals for a new Metropolitan Opera House for nearly twenty-five years, recommended to Houghton that he "think of putting the two halls together in some fashion..."²⁹ Coincidentally, the Metropolitan's committee had considered the idea of adding a concert hall for the Philharmonic, and proposed the concept to Moses early in its discussions as well.

After agreeing to the plan, the Metropolitan and Philharmonic organizations determined that the most effective means of fund-raising for their music and arts center would be to consolidate their capital campaigns. Furthermore, since an

enterprise of this magnitude would benefit considerably from a civic leader who was both experienced in fund-raising and connected to the New York business community, the two organizations approached John D. Rockefeller, III, grandson of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller, about helping them in their joint endeavor.

Within a year after graduating from Princeton in 1929, John D. Rockefeller, III, worked for his father, serving on more than thirty foundation and non-profit organization boards—in addition to assisting him in the development of the for-profit Rockefeller Center. By the early 1950s, his humanitarian work had become more globally oriented as he became a prime consultant to the State Department on Japanese affairs, and established councils on population growth and economic development, significantly advancing research in those fields. Although he had had no connection with arts organizations in the past, he became an ardent proponent, maintaining that the arts could “contribute to the health and happiness of people” and for that reason, should be made “broadly available.”³⁰ A prelude to this commitment occurred in the planning of Rockefeller Center in 1930, when the family proposed the Metropolitan Opera House as a component of its civic center master plan. Once Rockefeller had made a promise to assist the Metropolitan Opera and Philharmonic Society in their joint endeavor, an exploratory committee was formed to define both the center’s mission and its future constituency.

Comprised of Rockefeller, Harrison and representatives from the Metropolitan Opera Association and the Philharmonic-Symphony Society, the committee began meeting in the fall of 1955 to discuss what sort of other activities might foster a greater appreciation of the arts—both within the city and the country at large.³¹ On

December 13, 1955, several months after its initial meeting, the committee had expanded its name, membership and goals. Calling itself “The Exploratory Committee for a Musical Arts Center,” the group had already invited other prominent members of the New York artistic community into its circle.³² Moreover, the committee decided “to determine the feasibility of a musical arts center in the City not only for the opera and symphony but also for such activities as chamber music, ballet, light opera, and spoken drama, and possible educational programs related thereto.”³³ What eventually transpired was the proposal for a concert hall, a dance theater, an opera house, a library-museum, a dramatic theater, a chamber music hall, a performing arts conservatory, an outdoor bandshell and several outdoor plazas.

On June 22, 1956, the Exploratory Committee created Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, that would not only be owner and landlord to some of its constituents along with the City of New York, but also “encourage, sponsor, or facilitate performances and exhibitions, commission the creation of new works, and voluntarily assist the education of artists and students of these arts.”³⁴ Intent on building a center that, in the words of Rockefeller, would “stand as a symbol of America’s cultural maturity, affirming for people everywhere [America’s] faith in the life of the spirit,” its founders had aspirations for Lincoln Center that embodied emerging postwar attitudes toward the arts in America.³⁵ Furthermore, in his appeal to Eisenhower’s assistant in order to obtain Title I write-down subsidies for Lincoln Center, Rockefeller reasoned that “the Lincoln Center project is in harmony with the President’s program to strengthen the cultural position of the United States around the globe.”³⁶

These goals, according to *The New York Times*, included centralizing the arts in order to “focus the city’s and country’s attention in a grand and striking way on their value;” creating state-of-the-art buildings to “rais[e] [artistic] standards and achievements;” facilitating cross-pollination within the various art forms through a “unifying concept;” erecting “a beautiful, homogeneous addition to the [city’s] physical majesty;” economizing on maintenance costs by building integrated structures; enlisting the broadest financial support available to the arts through centralization; and incorporating an “integrated educational set-up” so that “the center could become a training ground for gifted young men and women from all over America in the techniques and ideals of the performing arts.”³⁷

In keeping with these goals, the organization assembled a team of planners and architects that were some of the most influential designers of the time creating corporate, institutional and residential architecture. Among the professionals involved in the planning of the complex were Wallace K. Harrison, Philip C. Johnson, Sven Markelius, Marcel Breuer, Alvar Aalto, Pietro Belluschi and Henry R. Shepley. The architectural team included Harrison (Metropolitan Opera House, 1966); Johnson (New York State Theater, 1964); Belluschi, in association with Eduardo Catalano and Helge Westermann (The Juilliard School, 1969); Max Abramovitz (Philharmonic Hall, 1962; renamed Avery Fisher Hall, 1976); Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (New York City Library for the Performing Arts, 1965; renamed the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center, 2001); and Eero Saarinen (Vivian Beaumont Theater, 1965). For the design of the plaza and park areas, the organization commissioned Harrison & Abramovitz (underground parking, park and plaza areas), Daniel Kiley

(Lincoln Center Plaza North and South/Damrosch Park, 1960-65); and Richard Webel of Darling, Innocenti & Webel (Lincoln Center Plaza South/Damrosch Park, 1960-65).

Taken together, this extraordinary team of professionals formed the largest collaboration of American postwar planners and architects on one complex in the history of the world. Among their many pioneering achievements in the realm of modern design were the United Nations Headquarters (Harrison, Director of Planning, 1947-1953), select buildings within Rockefeller Center (Harrison, with Corbett, Harrison and MacMurray, 1932-1940; later with Abramovitz, 1959-1973), and modern icons that included the Equitable Building in Portland, Oregon (Belluschi, 1945-1948), the Lever House Building, NYC (Bunshaft, 1952), the plaza landscape of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, (Kiley, with Walter Netsch, architect, 1956), the Seagram Building, NYC (Johnson, in association with Mies van der Rohe, 1958), the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial arch, St. Louis (Saarinen, with landscape design by Kiley, 1959-1964) and the TWA Terminal (Saarinen, 1962).³⁸

In addition to boasting an unparalleled American design team, the Lincoln Center organization was committed to implementing an effective fund-raising strategy. Accordingly, through the financing of its colossal undertaking, the center's founders eventually succeeded in raising an unprecedented amount of capital from both the public and private sector ever dedicated to the arts.³⁹ Costing nearly \$185 million, Lincoln Center received \$62 million from private donations, \$62 million from foundations, \$10 million from corporate sponsors, \$5 million from foreign

governments and \$37 million dollars from local, state and federal governments.⁴⁰

Moreover, by involving the business community directly, the center's organization created the first powerful lobbying group for the arts both in the state capital and in Washington that, in turn, helped other performing arts centers obtain funding in subsequent years.⁴¹

As an experiment in urban renewal, Lincoln Center succeeded in proving that a centralized arts facility could serve as a catalyst for economic revitalization. Ironically, in spite of being an urban renewal project that pitted both planners and preservationists against it, Lincoln Center nevertheless contributed to a renaissance in the Upper West Side neighborhood of Manhattan that included both new development and restoration of existing buildings. Shortly after the campus was completed, a *New York Times* article written in 1969 extolled that "the center's gleaming facades and broad plazas continue to attract builders as well as strollers and devotees of the arts to the area while spurring property owners in the neighborhood to clean up, fix up and renovate."⁴²

Even architectural critic, Paul Goldberger, who had expressed reservations about the center's undemocratic plan, admitted that it "has turned out to have had a profound effect on the city around it, spawning everything from restaurants and boutiques to luxury apartment houses."⁴³ Concurring with Goldberger's assessment, Robert A. M. Stern, co-author of *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*, wrote, "It would almost be too difficult to overstate the importance Lincoln Center played in the growth and prosperity of the area around it and the whole Upper West Sides."⁴⁴

Striving to emulate the success of Lincoln Center and other postwar performing arts centers in spurring the economic revitalization of their surrounding communities, other municipalities over the years have followed suit. In a 1997 *New York Times* article entitled "Cities Are Fostering the Arts As a Way to Save Downtown," author Hilary Frost-Kumpf noted, "Almost every community in this country is using the arts in some way as a part of revitalization."⁴⁵ *Times* journalist Bruce Weber concurred, noting how cities currently invest "large amounts of public money in museums, concert halls and theaters to create tourist destinations, burnish regional reputations and stimulate blighted neighborhoods."⁴⁶ While planning experts, such as James W. Hughes, dean of Rutgers University's planning school have cautioned that cultural centers are not in and of themselves capable of spurring revitalization, Lincoln Center and its postwar successors suggest that the arts can indeed exert a positive impact on their communities in making them more attractive places to live.⁴⁷

Other Performing Arts Centers in America

Undeniably, Lincoln Center and its influence on the adjacent community brought recognition to the concept of the performing arts center in America. However, it could by no means lay claim to having originated the term. Established in 1861 and still thriving today, the Brooklyn Academy of Music calls itself "America's oldest performing arts center," owing to its history of diverse programming encompassing opera, symphony, dance and theater within its dual performance halls.⁴⁸ However, unlike the postwar performing arts centers in Milwaukee and New York, the academy it did not provide separate, customized facilities for each of its distinct types of performances. Nonetheless, emulating the Brooklyn Academy of Music, many

professional and amateur arts organizations still refer to their multi-use single theaters as “performing arts centers,” despite comparisons with multi-building campuses with customized facilities. Furthermore, Martin E. Segal, former chairman of Lincoln Center, noted how many so-called performing arts centers do not house local companies but are “really booking concerns,” thereby creating additional distinctions between legitimate performing arts centers, housing resident performance companies, and those, exclusively devoted to touring productions.⁴⁹

In essence, like the Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, Lincoln Center was a bold experiment in centralizing the arts through a range of auditoriums and outdoor public spaces that served as a conceptual model for other centers nationwide. Embodied by several different modern styles that included formalist (Avery Fisher Hall / New York State Theater / Metropolitan Opera House), International Style (Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center/ Vivian Beaumont Theater) and brutalist (The Juilliard School), it offered a cohesive yet varied ensemble of buildings. In fact, as a work of modern architecture, its collection of buildings was so influential that other select cities, consumed with what critics coined an “edifice complex,” built their own performing arts centers in a comparable formalist style on a similarly monumental scale.⁵⁰

In Los Angeles, Dorothy Chandler, wife of the Times-Mirror magnate, began an ardent campaign of her own in 1955 to enable Los Angeles “to fulfill its destiny as one of the great cultural capitals for the world” through the construction of its own performing arts center.⁵¹ Originally conceived as a single, multi-purpose civic auditorium, the Music Center Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County grew to

become three theaters within a plaza setting atop the city's Bunker Hill. Designed by architect, Welton Becket & Associates, in association with landscape architects, Cornell Bridges and Troller, the center entailed the construction of a 3,250-seat theater-concert hall, known as the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, and its adjacent plaza (1964); the 750-seat Mark Taper Forum (1967) and the 2,100-seat Ahmanson Theater (1967).⁵² Costing a total of \$33.5 million upon completion, the performing arts center was and continues to be owned by the County of Los Angeles.⁵³

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., in spite of repeated attempts by the President and Congress to launch a cultural center in 1955, it was not until 1958 that a National Cultural Center Act was passed, a site was picked and an architect was chosen.⁵⁴ Yet, in spite of the passing of this resolution, the federally-initiated, public-private project still spurred debates regarding location and feasibility, and inadequate funding. Even President and Mrs. Kennedy, who had by example increased awareness and patronage of the arts by showcasing American artists through their series of White House concerts, were not able to make the national cultural center a tangible reality.

In fact, it took the President's assassination in 1963, coupled with his successor's singlemindedness, to impel Congress to mandate the construction of the National Cultural Center. Shortly thereafter, the proposed center was renamed in the President's honor and later—as a testament to the late leader's vitality and its program—became fittingly known as the “living memorial.”⁵⁵ After prolonged disagreement, construction finally began in 1967 on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, designed by architect, Edward Durrell Stone. Comprised of a single, self-contained 2,761-seat concert hall, a 1,110-seat theater, a 2,200-seat

multi-use auditorium and a 500-seat multi-use film theater, the Kennedy Center was completed in September 1971 at a cost of \$23 million dollars in federal grants, \$25 million in private contributions and \$20 million in federal loans.⁵⁶

A Proliferation of Cultural Centers

While the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Milwaukee Center for the Performing Arts and the Music Center Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County had similar missions, New York's eventual sixteen-acre comprehensive version was built on a scale much greater than its counterparts, and exerted more influence in the design and planning of subsequent performing arts centers across the country. In fact, by 1965, it was estimated that nearly 70 new cultural centers were being planned or built across the country, using the concept of Lincoln Center as their model.⁵⁷ However, like the term "performing arts center," "cultural center" was also a term that was used broadly. Although some consisted of combinations of exhibition and performance spaces, many of these complexes had no performing arts component to them at all, such as Le Corbusier's Visual Arts Center at Harvard University (1962); or additions to existing art museums, such as Mies van der Rohe's Cullinan Hall (1958) and later, Brown Pavilion (1974), at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts; and William L. Pereira & Associates' three pavilions for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1965).

Others, devoted primarily to the performing arts, consisted of outdoor pavilions; single, multi-use theaters; self-contained buildings housing more than one theater; or ensembles of buildings following the model of Lincoln Center—all featuring state-of-the-art equipment and technology. Saratoga Performing Arts Center in New

York State (Robert L. Rotner, Vollmer Ostrower Associates, 1966), Santa Fe Opera Pavilion in New Mexico (McHugh & Kidder, 1968) and New Jersey's Garden State Arts Center in Holmdel (Edward Durrell Stone, 1968) were all examples of modern pavilions designed for multi-use during the postwar era. Some of the single, multi-use theaters designed at the time included Ft. Lauderdale's Parker Playhouse (John Volk, 1967), Clowes Memorial Hall at Butler University in Indianapolis (1962) and Flint College Cultural Center (Smith, Hinchman & Gryllis, 1969).

Other buildings and complexes, clearly based on Lincoln Center's formalist model, included the Los Angeles Music Center and Kennedy Center, as well as other complexes in the south and northeast. The former Memorial Arts Center in Atlanta, renamed the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center (Toombs, Amisano and Wells in association with Stevens & Wilkinson, 1968), was an unusual combination of old and new that wrapped a colonnaded self-contained concert hall, two theaters and an art library around an existing thirteen-year-old museum. The municipally-owned Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts in Houston (Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, 1964) was clad in travertine, similar to the complexes in Milwaukee and New York, and featured an asymmetrical plan set within a monumental 250-foot square columnar arcade. Called "the most sophisticated building of its kind anywhere in the world," this multi-functional building was augmented four years later by its plaza neighbor, the Alley Theater, which housed two theaters within an imposing concrete fortress (Ulrich Franzen, 1968).⁵⁸ Nearly twenty years later, the Wortham Center, with its 2,465-seat opera house and 1,100-seat theater completed the municipal arts complex (Eugene Aubry, Morris Aubry Architects, 1987).

Among the postwar cultural centers being designed within college campuses, direct links to Lincoln Center were more obvious. In the case of the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire (Wallace K. Harrison, Harrison & Abramovitz, 1962), Lincoln Center's coordinating architect not only designed it, but also introduced the Florentine arch motif that would later reappear in his design for the Metropolitan Opera House. Avery Fisher Hall's architect, Max Abramovitz, was commissioned to design the Krannert Center at his alumnus, the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (Max Abramovitz, 1969). To aid him in his design, Abramovitz consulted with acoustician, Cyril M. Harris, who had previously worked on the Metropolitan Opera House and did the 1975-1976 acoustical renovation of Philharmonic Hall. Abramovitz's design for the Krannert Center, though monumental in stature, was more emblematic of International Style idioms in its approach.

Exceptional Importance

As complexes that are less than fifty years old, performing arts centers constructed during the postwar era nevertheless deserve special recognition on the National Register of Historic Places. Emblematic of a time when great numbers of Americans were discovering the arts and America was intent on promoting its cultural identity, these centers play a significant role in the country's evolution as a competitive force on the international stage of arts presentation and appreciation. Furthermore, referencing models that were simultaneously being proposed and created in Washington, D.C. and New York City after World War II, these campuses represent a concerted effort by private individuals working in partnership with local, state and federal officials to promote the arts on an unprecedented scale. Inherent in this

scheme, a new concept of centralizing the arts was born whereby separate and/or multi-use state-of-the-art facilities for the symphony, opera, theater, dance, research and exhibition, or any combination thereof, were aggregated to form a unique cultural complex.

In addition, master planners, eschewing traditional planning principles, devised majestic configurations in order to make the performing arts more prominent in the lives of Americans. Complementing these plans, leading modern architects of the era designed monumental buildings that often adhered to a formalist aesthetic in which classically-inspired elements were applied to contemporary structures. Similarly, interior designs, utilizing expansive space and elegant materials in their execution, were imbued with modern principles of abstraction, geometry and uniformity. Taken together, these distinctive complexes signify a burgeoning movement in architecture for the arts, when, to quote architect Philip C. Johnson, architects began “looking away from the Puritanism of the International Style toward enriched forms.”⁵⁹

Equally significant, these cultural complexes represent a consolidated effort by the public and private sectors to make America a contender in the international cultural realm. In his ground-breaking speech at Lincoln Center on May 14, 1959 with 12,000 people in attendance and a television audience estimated in the millions, President Eisenhower proclaimed:

The beneficial influence of this great cultural adventure will not be limited to our borders. Here will occur a true interchange of the fruits of national cultures. From this will develop a growth that will spread to the corners of the earth, bringing with it the kind of human message that only individuals, not governments, can transmit. Here will

develop a mighty influence for peace and understanding throughout the world. And the attainment through universal understanding of peace with justice is today, as always, the noblest and most shining ideal toward which man can strive and climb.⁶⁰

Furthermore, this commitment to the arts, realized in the various performing arts centers which were erected throughout the country during the late 1950s and 1960s, enabled citizens from both the urban centers and the suburbs to experience culture beyond the realm of their television sets or movie theaters.

Post-Postwar Performing Arts Centers

By 1970, more than 3,000 performing arts facilities were built across the country.⁶¹ While many of these structures were multi-purpose rooms, constructed for churches, community centers, elementary schools and high schools, other more prominent facilities were devoted to professional programming, either housing resident symphony, dance, opera and theater companies, or hosting touring groups from other national or international cities.

Cultural centers built since the 1970s reaffirm pioneering ideas introduced by postwar leaders and planners that the arts can serve as a stimulus for economic revitalization. However, in contrast to urban renewal initiatives during the postwar era to demolish existing neighborhoods, newer developments often incorporate historic performance venues in addition to new construction to form cultural districts.

Cleveland's Playhouse Square Center Foundation consists of the conglomeration of three separate but adjacent historic theaters from the early 1920s, originally built to house film, vaudeville and theater performances, that were restored and added onto

during the 1980s, now operating as four theaters under a parent entity, similar to Lincoln Center's.⁶² Similarly, the vintage 1926 Stanley Theater in Pittsburgh re-opened in 1987 with an additional performance venue and reinvented itself as the Benedum Center.⁶³ In 1997, there were 55 to 60 locally-designated cultural districts in America, incorporating postwar ideas of arts centralization and more recent models of preservation.⁶⁴

Today, the American postwar performing arts center continues to exert a profound influence on the national urban landscape. *New York Times* journalist Bruce Weber observed how Lincoln Center has served as the "historical model" for more contemporary arts complexes in cities such as Palm Beach, Philadelphia, Newark and Miami, among others.⁶⁵ In fact, both the public and the private sectors, in emulating conceptual models popularized by Lincoln Center, aspire to not only promote the arts and stimulate economic revitalization, but to also improve their cities. When asked about Miami's motives for building its new cultural center, Michael Spring, director of the Metro-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, proclaimed, "We have aspirations to be one of the great cities of the 21st century. Our civic leaders believe that great cities have great buildings. This will be the jewel in our crown."⁶⁶ Thus, the American postwar performing arts center has provided a model for subsequent centers across the country intent on celebrating the arts, stimulating economic revitalization and burnishing their city's image.



3. Milwaukee Performing Arts Center



4. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts



5. Los Angeles Music Center
Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County



6. National Cultural Center model. Pres. John F. Kennedy, center;
Edward Durrell Stone, to his left, and members of the building committee



7. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts



8. Atlanta Memorial Arts Center



9. Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts



10. Krannert Center for the Performing Arts



11. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Ground-Breaking Ceremony, May 14, 1959



12. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Ground-Breaking Ceremony
Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower with shovel

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For background on Pierre L'Enfant's proposal for the capital city, see Pierre L'Enfant, Letter to George Washington, September 11, 1789, reprinted in Elizabeth S. Kite, *L'Enfant and Washington 1791-1792*, Historical Documents Institute Francais de Washington, III (Reprint Edition, New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1970), p.37, at www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/arts_meersman.html, p.1.
- ² Quoted in *ibid.*, p.1.
- ³ For background on early proposals for a federally-initiated cultural center, see www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/arts_meersman.html, pp.1-2.
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p.2.
- ⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁷ *ibid.*
- ⁸ *ibid.*
- ⁹ "Ike Likes the Arts, So-U.S. May Export Culture," *U.S. News & World Report*, January 28, 1955, v.38, p.68.
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.68.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² *ibid.*, p.70.
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Some articles concerning America's cultural obsession and inferiority include: "Ike Likes the Arts, So-U.S. May Export Culture," *U.S. News & World Report*, January 28, 1955, v.38, pp.68-70; Irwin Edman, "The Myth of America in Europe," *The Saturday Review*, May 23, 1953, v.36, pp.11-12,39-40; "A Cultural Explosion," *Life*, October 18, 1954, v.37, p.38; "The Clamor For Culture," *Newsweek*, February, 10, 1958, v.51, pp.98-104.
- ¹⁵ Statistics from "The Clamor For Culture," p.98.
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.98, 100.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.100.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*
- ²¹ For a discussion of location, funding and control issues relating to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, see www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/arts_meersman.html, pp.3-22.
- ²² Louise Fenton Brand, former music and drama critic of the *Sentinel*, as quoted in Jay Joslyn, "A War Memorial Is Born," at www.marcuscenter.org/hist_war.html, p.1.
- ²³ Jay Joslyn, "A War Memorial Is Born," at www.marcuscenter.org/hist_war.html, p.1.
- ²⁴ In 1995, the board of the Milwaukee Performing Arts Center voted to change the name of the complex to the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, after having received a substantial donation from the Marcus Corporation Foundation for its redevelopment campaign.
- ²⁵ For history on the Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Area Project, see Edgar B. Young, "Needs and Opportunity," in *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, (New York: New York University Press, 1980) pp.11-12, and Young, "Urban Renewal," pp.35-48; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, David Fishman, "Lincoln Square," in *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, Inc., 1995) p.677-681; Joseph C. Ingraham, "Slum-Razing Plan Offers Fordham Midtown Campus," *The New York Times*, April 8, 1955, pp.1+.; Charles Grutzner, "Moses Outlines City Within City for Lincoln Sq.," *The New York Times*, May 28, 1956, pp.1,21; Richard A. Miller, "Lincoln Center: 'a new kind of institution,'" *Architectural Forum*, August 1958, pp. 74-77,158.
- ²⁶ Quoted in Victoria Newhouse, "Lincoln Center," in Wallace K. Harrison, *Architect*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) p.187.

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- ²⁷ Ingraham, "Slum-Razing Plan Offers Fordham Midtown Campus," pp.1+.
- ²⁸ For background on the New York Philharmonic's imminent eviction from Carnegie Hall, see Newhouse, "Lincoln Center," p.186, and Young, "Needs and Opportunity," p.14.
- ²⁹ Newhouse, "Lincoln Center," p.186.
- ³⁰ Seymour Peck, "A Rockefeller Enters 'Show Biz,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, November 18, 1956, p.62.
- ³¹ For detailed background on Rockefeller's Exploratory Committee for a Musical Arts Center, see Young, "The Exploratory Committee: 1955-1956," pp.19-34.
- ³² Young, "The Exploratory Committee: 1955-1956," pp.20-21.
- ³³ Although separate facilities for the visual arts had also been suggested, the Exploratory Committee ultimately decided that since they were already well represented within the city, they should be placed within the proposed performing arts buildings. Young, "The Exploratory Committee: 1955-1956," p.21.
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p.51.
- ³⁵ Quoted in "Center Is Viewed As Arts Capital," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1956, p.43.
- ³⁶ John D. Rockefeller, III's conversation with Eisenhower assistant, Sherman Adams, as quoted in Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and the Redevelopment of the Inner City*, (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1993) p.283.
- ³⁷ "Symbol of U.S. Culture," *The New York Times*, July 23, 1956, p.25.
- ³⁸ Credits compiled from Norval White and Elliot Willensky, *AIA Guide to New York City*, Fourth Edition, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000).
- ³⁹ Richard F. Shepard, "Lincoln Center—The First 20 Years," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1979, II, p.2.
- ⁴⁰ Young, "Conclusion of Capital Fund Raising: 1966-1969," p.281.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*
- ⁴² William Robbins, "Din of Construction Resounds in Lincoln Center Area," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1969, VIII, p.1.
- ⁴³ Goldberger, "Architecture: Lincoln Center and Changes Wrought by 20 Years," p.15.
- ⁴⁴ Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA, letter to Bernadette Castro, Commissioner, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, in favor of State and National Register nominations of Lincoln Center, July 19, 2000.
- ⁴⁵ Quoted in Bruce Weber, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts As a Way to Save Downtown," *The New York Times*, November 18, 1997, p.A24.
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ For Brooklyn Academy of Music history, see www.bam.org/asp/info.asp. A survey undertaken by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen concluded that by 1964, 82 American cities had plans to erect cultural centers. It also stated that there were 54 existing cultural centers and 39 in various stages of completion in 1964. The authors noted that the term "cultural centers" had been interpreted loosely by many "borderline" organizations who defined themselves as such even though they were more community centers than performing arts centers. William J. Baumol and William G. Bower, *Performing Arts – The Economic Dilemma*, (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1966) p.40.
- ⁴⁹ Quoted in Weber, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts As a Way to Save Downtown," p.A24.
- ⁵⁰ Richard F. Shepard, "Lincoln Center—The First 20 Years," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1979, II, p.2.
- ⁵¹ Quoted in "Cultural Centers Across the Land," *Newsweek*, September 24, 1962, v.60, p.54. For background information on the Los Angeles Music Center, see *Report to the County of Los Angeles on a New Auditorium and Music Center*, (Cambridge, MA: Arthur D. Little, Inc., 1956); "The Stage: Three in the West," *Time*, April 21, 1967, v.89, pp.88-89.
- ⁵² "History," www.musiccenter.org/history.html, p.1, and Walter McQuade, "A New Generation of Cultural Centers," *Fortune*, September 1, 1968, v.78, p.111.
- ⁵³ *ibid.*

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- ⁵⁴ For background on the establishment of a national cultural center, see "Kennedy Center Slowdown," *Newsweek*, March 10, 1969, v.73, p.109; "Whatever Happened to...THE KENNEDY CULTURAL CENTER," *U.S. News & World Report*, September 22, 1969, v.67, p.17; "Cultural Crown for the Nation's Capital," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 8, 1971, v.70, p.38.
- ⁵⁵ "Kennedy Center Slowdown," p.109. In 1965, President Johnson also established the National Endowment for the Arts as a means of providing government subsidy to foster arts creation and education throughout the country, <http://arts.endow.gov/learn/NEAGuide/Partnerships.html>, p.1.
- ⁵⁶ "Cultural Crown for the Nation's Capital," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 8, 1971, v.70, p.40.
- ⁵⁷ "Room for Culture, Too, in the President's Plans," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 1, 1965, v.58, p.41.
- ⁵⁸ Mildred F. Schmertz, "For concerts, dance and drama: FLEXIBLE DESIGN," *Architectural Record*, February 1967, v.141, p.116.
- ⁵⁹ Quoted in Howard C. Schonberg, "Six Architects in Search of a Center," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 8, 1959, VI, p.22.
- ⁶⁰ Quoted in "Addresses by Eisenhower and Moses," *The New York Times*, May 15, 1959, p.14.
- ⁶¹ Schmertz, "For concerts, dance and drama: FLEXIBLE DESIGN," p.115.
- ⁶² Weber, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts As a Way to Save Downtown," p.A24.
- ⁶³ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ Schmertz, "For concerts, dance and drama: FLEXIBLE DESIGN," p.115.
- ⁶⁶ Quoted in Weber, "Cities Are Fostering the Arts As a Way to Save Downtown," p.A24.

CHAPTER 2

RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION

Significance and Recognition

The American postwar performing arts center is exceptionally important for the significant role it has played in the evolution of the country's cultural life.

Incorporating ideals that were originally envisioned by Pierre L'Enfant in his plan for Washington, D.C., these centers represent a fulfillment of the architect's goals not just in the nation's capital, but also in other major cities of the United States. Physical expressions of cultural affluence and power, these centers moreover embodied the Cold War ideology of the Eisenhower administration which sought to make the arts more prominent in the lives of all Americans as well as more visible to the world at large. Augmented by President and Mrs. Kennedy, whose arts patronage was emulated through public and private sector initiatives that sought to make the arts more accessible to all Americans, this support later culminated in President Johnson's establishment of the National Endowment of the Arts in 1965. Thus, between 1954 and 1968 Americans experienced a cultural renaissance in which awareness of the arts was not only heightened through public policies and national trends, but also made more accessible through the construction of performing arts centers.

In fact, these centers were the first of their kind in the United States to feature customized, comprehensive facilities for the performing arts, often in multi-building complexes. Consequently, these cultural campuses raised the visibility and the

accessibility of the arts during the 1950s and 1960s on both domestic and international levels. Since the 1970s, they have continued to influence the ways in which the performing arts are presented throughout the United States as other complexes have been erected, incorporating similar concepts of customization, comprehensiveness and centralization. As architectural works, these formalist designs decry a modern movement in transition in which modern building systems were superimposed with classically-inspired forms in order to project images of monumentality and timelessness. Similarly, planners and landscape designers mirrored these classical abstractions in building and plaza configurations whose uncluttered and sometimes elevated plans reflected their community's concerted effort to bring more heightened awareness to the performing arts.

Accordingly, as a means of fostering national recognition and protection of these significant resources, the American postwar performing arts center warrants state and national listing on the National Register of Historic Places.¹ Since practically all of these complexes were planned between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s and not completed until a decade later, they are less than fifty years in age. Regulations concerning National Register Criteria state:

As a general rule, properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years are not eligible for National Register listing because the Register is intrinsically a compilation of the nation's historic resources that are worthy of preservation...The passage of time is necessary in order to apply the adjective 'historic' and to ensure adequate perspective.²

However, 36 Code Federal Regulation 60 of the National Register Criteria states that buildings of “exceptional importance” less than fifty years old may be considered eligible for listing.³ Furthermore, there are currently over one thousand buildings that have met this criterion of “exceptional importance.”⁴ Since the American postwar performing arts center not only demonstrates significance within the context of American cultural history, but also in the evolution of an entirely new type of building grouping, a case for exceptional importance could be made as a means of attaining National Register listing.⁵

Historic District Listing

One of the most distinctive qualities of the American postwar performing arts center is its cohesive design, comprised of buildings that are often integrated with plaza landscapes. Given the fact that this cohesiveness of concept and design is one of the key contributions to its significance, it should be designated accordingly as an historic district. According to National Register Criteria, to be eligible for nomination as an historic district, the properties must “possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”⁶

Ironically, in spite of the fact that Rockefeller Center is one of the most notable urban complexes to have ever been listed on the National Register (listed 1988), it was designated as a multiple building property rather than as an historic district. Nevertheless, its significance as an ensemble work cannot be disputed, owing both to its historical and developmental conception as a commercial complex, and to its

unifying elements of style, materials, artwork, monumentality and symmetry among its buildings and plazas. Like Rockefeller Center, the postwar performing arts center was also conceived as a collective entity that was bound together by a particular program. Furthermore, postwar performing arts centers also incorporated unified elements such as those noted at Rockefeller Center, making them highly significant as works in their entirety as well as individual structures and landscapes.

As previously noted, the seminal complex in Milwaukee, consisting of the Milwaukee County War Memorial hall, its adjacent plaza and the Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, was conceived as a war memorial to the soldiers who fought in World War II. Similar to Lincoln Center in its cohesive mix of styles, the War Memorial is an International-style building, while the performing arts center was designed in a cubist style with Roman travertine cladding that referenced its counterpart with a more modified cantilever.⁷ Both buildings are stylistically united by a plaza which features a black granite memorial. Similarly, the formalist Music Center Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County was planned and built over a three-year period and has unifying elements of classically-inspired columns and colonnades surrounding its vast performance halls. In addition, its geometrically-configured plaza design incorporates natural landscaping such as trees, plantings and water elements throughout in order to give the complex further cohesion. Occupying a seven-acre city block that sits majestically above the heart of downtown Los Angeles, the Music Center is an abstract version of a modern-day Acropolis and purports to be the country's third largest performing arts center.⁸

Even more magnificent in its scope, Lincoln Center also merits listing as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. Intent on creating the greatest performing arts complex in the world, its civic leaders strove for an organizational structure that was unified in its constituency, while its master planners and designers sought to create a cultural center that was unified in its aesthetic. In order to accomplish the former, John D. Rockefeller, III, and his exploratory committee established an innovative concept whereby the center's constituents would be part of a larger parent organization.

Regarding the latter, Wallace K. Harrison's team of designers made specific choices concerning the relationship between all of the buildings and more specifically, the scale, massing and promenade levels of Avery Fisher Hall, the New York State Theater and the Metropolitan Opera House on the southern plaza. As the focal point of this area, Harrison's team decided that the Metropolitan Opera House would have more flexibility in its overall design than the two theaters flanking it, which would be uniform in terms of their scale and massing. However, all three buildings would have promenade levels of identical heights to give cohesion to the entire plaza ensemble.

With regard to exterior building materials, the designers contemplated a variety of stones including marble, granite and quartz. However, they eventually concurred with Pietro Belluschi's recommendation of Roman travertine marble, with its gleaming white-beige layerings, its rich history as a building material in ancient Rome and, in the words of Philip Johnson, its ability to "grow old more beautifully."⁹ The travertine that was used at Lincoln Center, as well as at Houston's Jesse H. Jones Hall, was quarried from Bagni di Tivoli, where ancient builders obtained it for the Colosseum in

Rome. In his 1996 reassessment of Lincoln Center, *New York Times* architectural critic, Herbert Muschamp had praise for the entire ensemble, including the “‘off-stage’ buildings” that “do not violate the cohesion that prevails throughout the complex.”¹⁰ Muschamp then added, “Given that each of the buildings at Lincoln Center was designed by a different architect, that appearance of unity may be the center’s most remarkable achievement.”¹¹ Ascribing even greater significance to the complex, Lincoln Center Chairwoman, Beverly Sills, has called it “an icon in the world.”¹²

Protection

Attaining historic district eligibility or listing on the State or National Registers is the first step toward ensuring protection of the postwar performing arts center. However, these inclusions alone will not trigger a review of proposed work, also known as an “undertaking,” on a building or site unless there is also federal involvement. More specifically, an “undertaking” is defined as:

A project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and those subject of State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency.¹³

Performing arts centers in the United States generally do not fall under the jurisdiction of a federal agency. Most are either owned by non-profit organizations, by regional or municipal governments, or in the case of Lincoln Center, a combination thereof.¹⁴ Even the Kennedy Center, a federally- mandated and funded organization with a

national purpose, is owned and operated by the Smithsonian Institution, a public trust.¹⁵

However, the majority of performing arts centers supplement private monies for their operations and programming from a variety of governmental sources which include the federally-funded National Endowment for the Arts, and state and local arts agencies. These public entities provide targeted funding for specific types of projects that in effect can determine whether or not an individual property or district, eligible or listed on the State or National Register, is required to undergo regulatory review. Also known as Section 106 under the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), this regulation mandates that Federal agencies must “take into account the effect of [an] undertaking” and “afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation...a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking.”¹⁶

Established to advise, encourage, recommend, review, as well as inform and educate, on all matters pertaining to the country’s policy on historic preservation, the Advisory Council is comprised of a host of appointed and elected officials and other public representatives.¹⁷ In addition to a presidential appointee to chair the council, it also includes the Secretary of the Interior; the Architect of the Capitol; the Secretary of Agriculture; the heads of four federal agencies, appointed by the President, whose activities involve historic preservation; a governor and mayor appointed by the President; the President of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers; the Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; four other presidential appointees who are considered “experts in the field of historic

preservation from the disciplines of architecture, history, archeology, and other appropriate disciplines;" more presidential appointees who are from the general public; and an appointee who is "a member of an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization."¹⁸ As a board that carries out the mission of the Historic Preservation Act, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation serves as the ultimate consulting authority with respect to undertakings. Although the council does not have a police power to prevent significant alteration or demolition of historic sites and properties, it nevertheless "ensure[s] that preservation values are factored into Federal agency planning and decisions."¹⁹

Subordinate to the council, each federal agency has its own officer to advise on matters related to historic preservation. Among other duties, this officer reviews capital projects to determine if an undertaking exists, and if it does, to ensure that the project does not have an "adverse effect" on the agency's historic resources.

According to the Advisory Council, an "adverse effect" is one that:

Alter[s] the characteristics that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, based on its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.²⁰

Some of the examples which the council cites include "physical destruction or damage, relocation of the property, change in the character of the property's use or setting, introduction of incompatible visual, atmospheric, or audible elements, neglect and deterioration, and transfer, lease, or sale out of Federal control without adequate preservation restrictions."²¹ In addition, the council refers to the Secretary of the

Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as a standard by which to assess the adverse effects of a historic resource.

It also bears noting that federal urban renewal projects, whether or not they are currently receiving funding, require either an environmental or a Section 106 review, pending Register eligibility or listing, when a property alteration is expected to have an adverse effect. According to Joe Mulany, Officer, Housing and Urban Development, if a project was originally developed under the auspices of an urban renewal project, at the very least, it must undergo an environmental review when proposing changes to its buildings or site.²² Mulany said, like the funding and permitting clauses for Register- eligible or listed buildings, the urban renewal precedent is a similar mechanism.²³

In general, most postwar performing arts centers, even if they were to be determined eligible or listed on the National Register, would not be obligated to undergo a Section 106 review because of their exclusivity of federal involvement unless they were urban renewal projects like Lincoln Center. However, the Kennedy Center would be subject to this oversight. In spite of the fact that its parent entity, the Smithsonian Institution, is not federally owned, the fact that the Kennedy Center receives ongoing federal funding for its operations makes it subject to Section 106. In fact, unlike funds which emanate from the National Endowment of the Arts and are targeted for programmatic and educational needs, Kennedy Center legislation actually mandates that "federal funds may be used only to maintain and care for the building, rather than finance what appears on its stages."²⁴ Moreover, in 1990 Congress authorized \$50 million to the Kennedy Center, to be awarded in installments of \$10

million per year over a five-year period, specifically allocated for renovation and reconstruction of its performance venues.²⁵ The first project, which was a renovation of the center's Concert Hall beginning in 1996, used the first \$10 million installment to perform upgrades to its physical structure and mechanical systems.²⁶ Had the center had the protection afforded by National Register eligibility or listing, it would by law have had to undergo a Section 106 review for compliance by the historic preservation officer of the federal granting agency.²⁷

Ironically, the most tangible and effective means of creating a national policy of protection for the majority of postwar performing arts centers is through state legislation. One of the tenets of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was the establishment of state branches to administer federal policy. Operating under the authority of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, these entities are instrumental in not only monitoring activities regulated by the federal government, but also in identifying a particular state's historic resources, providing compatible regulatory protection, assisting municipalities in their preservation programs and activities, and aiding private agencies and individuals in preservation projects. Modeled after the federal government's inventory method, each state has its own register, based on National Register Criteria of significance. In addition to providing a preliminary review process for properties and sites worthy of national designation, listing on a state register carries benefits similar to National Register recognition that includes eligibility for the Historic Tax Credit.

As a mechanism to protect historic resources at the state level, eligibility or listing on the State Register of Historic Places can initiate review that uses similar

criterion detailed by Section 106. Consequently, if a particular historic property or district has been recognized as such by the state, an undertaking would consist of any project that is state- owned, operated or funded, or requires licensing or permits by the state. Because many states have adopted such laws, this creates a viable means of regulating change with the postwar performing arts center since most of them fund a portion of their capital projects through a state arts agency. For example, New York's Section 14.09 was part of the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, which mandated that state agencies engaged in undertakings consult with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for review. Thus, as an urban renewal project, Lincoln Center by law has to undergo Section 106 review as a result of their eligibility for listing on the State Register. If that is not enforced, the organization must undergo Section 14.09 review if they use a modicum of state funding for the capital improvement projects.²⁸

Other states use different types of compatible legislation to produce the same results. California's Section 21084.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act uses a broader criterion that applies to all projects that are either eligible or are listed on the California Register. Under this regulation, any such designated property or district, in the face of an adverse effect, must be "considered to be a project which will have a significant impact on the environment" and must be monitored accordingly.²⁹

Wisconsin's Section 44.42 of the Historic Preservation Program mandates that a State Historic Preservation Officer has thirty days in which to determine whether or not an undertaking will have an adverse effect upon an historic property and requires "negotiations" with the state-affiliated property owner "to reduce such effects."³⁰

Georgia's Sections 12-16-1 through 12-16-8 of its Environmental Policy Act also requires state- owned and funded projects, eligible or listed on the Georgia Register, to be scrutinized by the state agency funding the undertaking. If an adverse effect is found, the agency must produce an environmental effects report that includes "a discussion of the environmental impact...alternatives to the action including no action; any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the action is undertaken; and mitigation measures proposed to avoid or minimize the adverse effect" as well as other assessments.³¹ This law also requires that before the agency issues its report, it consults with the historic preservation office for review.

Illinois' Citation 20 ILCS 3420/4 of the Illinois State Agency Historic Resources Protection Act offers legislation that not only offers protection of historic resources to state-affiliated projects, but also seeks to mediate opposition among opposing agencies. The Historic Preservation Mediation Committee, as established under this law, is formed to resolve disagreements pertaining to potentially adverse effects on state- eligible and listed historic resources. In order to do so, the legislation:

Requires the committee to meet with the director [of historic resources] and the submitting agency to evaluate the existence of a feasible alternative to the undertaking, and upon continued disagreement between the agency and the director regarding such alternative, to provide a statement of findings or comments setting forth an alternative to the proposed undertaking or stating that there is no such alternative.³²

Like New York's Preservation Law, Illinois' citation also references federal guidelines dictated by Section 106 review as a standard in which to assess undertakings.

These state preservation laws and others ultimately provide a framework whereby the American postwar performing arts center, in the event of state eligibility or listing on a state register, could undergo some form of regulatory review. Like the Advisory Council, these state-level entities exert influence in providing oversight to other state agencies that otherwise might disregard preservation practices. Like its parent entity, the National Parks Service, the Offices of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation does not exist to regulate, but primarily to encourage and advise. Nevertheless, when a particular state preservation commission has the authority to recommend whether or not a capital project receives state funds, permitting or licensing based on the extent of a property owner's commitment to preservation, this can be a powerful tool in the regulatory process.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ In proposing a national agenda of recognition and protection of the American postwar performing arts center, I am recommending the use of state and federal designations only. Although local designation is a more effective means of protection, it lacks the broad-based application that is central to my thesis.
- ² *National Register Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, revised 1996) p.1.
- ³ *National Register Bulletin: How To Apply The National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, revised 1998) p.2.
- ⁴ Charles A. Birnbaum, "Preserving Contemporary Landscape Architecture: Is Nothing Permanent But Change Itself?," in Charles A. Birnbaum, ed., *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture: Papers from the Wave Hill-National Park Service Conference*, November 1995, v.10, (Cambridge, MA: Spacemaker Press) p.6.
- ⁵ Currently, only Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has been deemed eligible for listing on the New York State Register.
- ⁶ "IV. How to Define Categories of Historic Properties," *ibid.*, p.5.
- ⁷ In 1997, the Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, now known as the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, underwent a substantial renovation in which its 107,000 square feet of Roman travertine cladding was replaced with Biesanz limestone.
- ⁸ www.musiccenter.org/history.html, p.1.
- ⁹ Quoted in "Lincoln Center Aids Ancient Spa," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1963, p.33.
- ¹⁰ Herbert Muschamp, "Lincoln Center's Enduring Vision," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1996, p.C1.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² Quoted in Daniel J. Wakin, "Modern Architecture Has a Midlife Crisis," *The New York Times*, May 15, 2000, p.B4.
- ¹³ *Federal Register*, v.65, no.239, December 12, 2000/Rules and Regulations, Definitions, §800.16 (y) p.77739.
- ¹⁴ Lincoln Center is a complex public-private enterprise in which the New York State Theater, the Performing Arts Library, its parks, plazas and underground parking facilities are owned by New York City, while Avery Fisher Hall, the Metropolitan Opera House, the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Juilliard School building are owned by the parent non-profit organization called Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. Edgar B. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, (New York: New York University Press, 1980).
- ¹⁵ According to Druscilla Null, representative from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, although the Kennedy Center is owned by the Smithsonian Institution, it has its own board of regents, thereby making it an entirely independent entity of the public trust. Conversation with the author, February 5, 2002.
- ¹⁶ "The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, As Amended," Title I, §106 (16 U.S.C. 470(f)) in *With Heritage So Rich*, (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Books, 1999), p. 214.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, Title II, §201 (16 U.S.C. 470(a)) in *ibid.*, p. 220.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, "Protecting Historic Properties: A Citizen's Guide to Section 106 Review" pamphlet, p.4.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p.6.
- ²¹ *ibid.*
- ²² Interview with Joe Mulany, Officer, Housing and Urban Development, March 18, 2002.
- ²³ *ibid.*
- ²⁴ Judith Weinraub and Tim Page, "Kennedy Center Set For Rehab: \$50 Million Overhaul Planned for Theaters," *The Washington Post*, November 11, 1995, p.A14.

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- ²⁵ *ibid.*, p.A1.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*, p.A14.
- ²⁷ Interview with Martha Caitlin, Representative, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, February 25, 2002.
- ²⁸ Currently, Lincoln Center receives money from the state through the administration of the city's Department of Cultural Affairs. Part of the money expected to fund its redevelopment is to come from the New York State Council on the Arts.
- ²⁹ "California Environmental Quality Act," *California Public Resources Code*, §21084.1 at www.ncsl.org/programs/arts/gethistrec99.cfm?record=694, p.1.
- ³⁰ "Historic Preservation Program," *Wisconsin Statutes*, §44.42 at www.ncsl.org/programs/arts/gethistrec99.cfm?record=535, p.1.
- ³¹ This legislation also stipulates that this act will only be in effect if the state provides more than 50% of funding toward the project or an amount more than \$250,000. "Environmental Policy Act," *Official Code of Georgia*, §12-16-1—12-16-6 at www.ncsl.org/programs/arts/gethistrec99.cfm?record=1490, p.1.
- ³² *ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

MAKING A CASE FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Federal or state eligibility or listing on the appropriate registers, along with their empowering regulations, can potentially assist preservationists in protecting significant components of the American postwar performing arts center. But given the identification of these historic resources, how should change be accommodated? Are programmatic needs enough to justify substantial alterations that may compromise the historic integrity of these buildings? Moreover, should the criterion of review for designated resources of the modern movement be any different than older historic structures? These and other questions become more pressing for performing arts centers designed and built between the 1950s and 1970s—as change itself becomes imminent.

Change

Confronted with a myriad of practical issues concerning the preservation of significant buildings—both historic and modern—a contingent of preservationists have proposed a more liberal approach that transcends current federal regulations, as outlined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Although the federal government acknowledges that “Change is as inevitable in buildings and neighborhoods as it is in individuals and families,” at the same time it also explicitly states that, “A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use

that requires *minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*"¹ [Author's italics]

However, in his epic treatise, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformation and Its Prospects*, urban planning scholar, Lewis Mumford, asserted that change was not only fundamental to a particular place, but also essential to its survival. Focusing on Europe, Mumford observed:

[T]he same 'medieval' town plan could, by the eighteenth century, hold together Romanesque, High Gothic, Florid, Renaissance, and Baroque structures, often jostling together on the same street, without an dulling of the esthetic moment: indeed, with just the contrary effect. The esthetic mixture corresponded with the historic social complex. This was a mode of planning that met the requirements of life, and yielded to change and innovation without being shattered by it. In the deepest sense of the words it was both functional and purposeful, for the functions that mattered most were those of significance to man's higher life.²

Mumford attributed the success of these towns to builders who were capable of "work[ing] the old and the new into an ever richer pattern."³ Contrasting this organic mode of planning, the urban scholar wrote, "The bastard estheticism of a single uniform style, set within a rigid town plan, arbitrarily freezing the historic process at a given moment, was left for a later period, which valued uniformity more than universality, and visible power more than the invisible processes of life."⁴

In offering his own prescription for regulating change, David DeLong, a preservation scholar and professor of architecture, city and regional planning at the University of Pennsylvania, has urged a focus on function, or "a modernist's vision...[to] guide the change" so that "we'll avoid the pitfalls of a fantasy of another

history, the 'don't touch' approach, and the condition of archaeology held hostage to tourism."⁵ Other colleagues within the profession have offered similar philosophies.

In his book entitled *The Powers of Preservation*, author-architect Arthur Cotton Moore made pointed distinctions about architectural preservation:

It is not a response to the anxiety provoked by growth and change, nor is it an antidevelopment, head-in-the-sand form of large-scale antique collection whose proponents hate anything new. Preservation is a carefully considered progrowth attitude that takes the most practical and economical position of working with the equity we already have. It is a point of view that sees the new as a potential beneficial addition to the patrimony of the old. Preservation provides the human-made earthscape out of which the new can freely flower because it sees the new and the old as natural partners in the continuum of history.⁶

Like Mumford, Moore does not merely accept change; he embraces it as a means of enhancing existing structures through thoughtful design.

Paul Spencer Byard offers similar attitudes with regard to additions to historic buildings. A former lawyer, a practicing architect and the director of Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program, Byard uses various case studies to substantiate his claims that modern design has the capacity both to respect and to enhance the old. In one of the author's more provocative statements, he redefines the notion of preservation altogether, maintaining:

The value of preservation is only partly in the accuracy and breadth of its understanding of the past. Its value in the end is the presentation the old and the new make together about continuity and difference. The value of the combined work increases, the richer and brighter the light of its novelty.⁷

Celebrating the potential of new design to complement the old, Byard urges regulatory agencies to make sure that in approving such proposals, they ensure that the historic building “occup[ies] the controlling role the public says it deserves.”⁸

Performance Venues

Over the past twenty years, several of the country’s most historically significant performance houses, such as New York’s Carnegie and Radio City Music halls, Chicago’s Orchestra Hall and Civic Opera House, and Philadelphia’s Academy of Music, have been modified to overcome acoustical deficiencies, spatial limitations, non-compliance with federal accessibility laws, outmoded technological and mechanical systems, while also repairing and/or replacing deteriorated interior and exterior elements.⁹ Similarly, European landmarks, such as London’s Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and Old Vic Theater, the Paris Opera House and Milan’s La Scala, have undergone, or are in the process of undergoing, substantial upgrades and expansions in order to make them programmatically viable in the 21st century.¹⁰

Should it be surprising then that American postwar performing arts centers, constructed a mere thirty to forty years ago, are already being targeted for redevelopment? Perhaps not, given the fact that many of these facilities were grandiose, collaborative experiments which, unlike their historic counterparts, were deemed functionally inadequate shortly after their completion. Having led a concert at the newly opened Philharmonic Hall in 1962, famed Cleveland Orchestra conductor, George Szell, vowed never to appear there again because of its faulty acoustics, urging the Lincoln Center organization to “Tear it down and start over.”¹¹

Acoustics were also an issue at the neighboring New York State Theater, where British director, Peter Brook, after rehearsing his Royal Shakespeare Company there during the theater's first week of operation, deemed its sound qualities "appalling," and demanded corrective measures to be taken.¹²

At the Kennedy Center, similar issues regarding acoustics prevailed—in addition to other design problems. *Washington Post* reporter, Marc Fisher, noted that in the months following the opening of Concert Hall in 1971:

[C]ritics and the listening public alike began to shout in protest over balcony seats that didn't face the stage, seats that required patrons to stand for the entire performance to see any of the stage, acoustics that made it impossible for musicians to hear one another across the stage, and a sound that audiences found sluggish, even leaden. Before long, the Concert Hall was saddled with a reputation as a lousy place in which to make or listen to music.¹³

Other flaws at postwar performance venues concerned legitimate theater designs.

Actor, Charlton Heston, who performed onstage in the early years of the Ahmanson Theater at the Music Center in Los Angeles, remembered that it had "been close to a disaster as a stage machine," and that an actor friend of his had equated acting on the Ahmanson stage with "'playing on the cliffs of Dover, except the audience is in France.'"¹⁴ *New York Times* theater critic, Clive Barnes, wrote that Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater "fell short of excellence," complaining about inadequate sight lines and "a strange compromise between the thrust stage and the arena stage, while still clinging to a nostalgia for the proscenium arch."¹⁵ Another journalist noted that the enormous Beaumont stage "has defeated even the most talented directors."¹⁶

Like Barnes' assertion of a "strange compromise" prevailing in the design of the Vivian Beaumont Theater, another critic saw the issue of compromise as endemic to these performing arts complexes as a whole. In his discussion of the postwar performing arts center, architectural critic C. Ray Smith concluded:

Besides the margin of human fallibility in projects of enormous complexity, the very tendency to monumentalize the building of a theatre—not its size but its significance—until it becomes overblown and out of proportion to the function for which it is planned, is a major danger today. Any 'over-consulted' theatre complex must become an ugly fruit of committee consultation and of villainous compromise.¹⁷

Smith's claim of "villainous compromise" was particularly relevant since the concept of design by committee was an integral component guiding the creation of the American postwar performing arts center—and one that adversely affected its outcome.

Unlike many of the historic American theaters and concert halls previously mentioned, which had been commissioned by a single individual or institution directing a single architect or firm, these postwar enterprises were the products of complex collaborations between government officials, philanthropists, planners, architects, consulting technicians and lay people. Consequently, these various groups, though united by a grand mission to create the most appealing, state-of-the-art facilities, instead conflicted with one other—both internally and externally—on many details, from overall location to site planning to building design to interior décor. Alluding to the flaws inherent in this collaborative process as it was being manifested in the planning stage of Lincoln Center, *New York Times* music critic, Harold Schonberg wrote:

Suppose six great pianists—Horowitz, Rubinstein, Novaes, Serkin, Richter and Backhaus, say; all mighty executants, all overpowering personalities—were locked in a room and ordered not to come out until they had decided on the correct interpretation of Beethoven’s ‘Hammerklavier’ Sonata. How many eons would pass? How many wounds would be inflicted? How much blood would be shed?¹⁸

Although Schonberg sympathized with the group effort of “aiming toward a workable solution of a very complicated architectural problem,” he nonetheless reasoned that “one man’s esthetic” was “another man’s poison.”¹⁹

But perhaps even more revealing of the Lincoln Center collaboration was Schonberg’s interview with its lead architect, Wallace K. Harrison. Having recounted his debilitating experience in the collaborative process for the United Nations Headquarters, Harrison described his approach to the Lincoln Center project with both resignation and hubris:

The older you get, the more you know your limitations—yours and everybody else’s. We’re going along as well as can be expected...We’re trying to do the thing as a group effort. This isn’t going to be the work of any one architect if I can help it. It won’t be just a *tour de force*. It has to be a damn sight better than that.²⁰

Contrary to Harrison’s statements acknowledging the limitations of collaboration, he nevertheless maintained that the end result would surpass “tour de force” design.²¹ In essence, this lofty statement was precisely what C. Ray Smith later criticized in his analysis of these centers. Commissioned to generate the best designs, yet hampered by decision-making committees that had their own agendas tied to taste and budget, these architects were almost destined to produce inadequate buildings.

Compounding this problem of compromise, these centers have also been affected by other issues, now recognized as endemic to buildings of the modern movement. One of these issues was the popular, but ill-conceived, planning ideal of making them self-contained, with limited integration with their surrounding communities. Other problems have concerned the use of unsuitable materials, which have proved to be non-durable when applied in certain ways, as well as vulnerable to particular American environments and climates. Another issue concerns an adherence to an aesthetic which, when executed, conflicts with program.²² Thus, beset with an entire set of new problems that are unique to their designs, the American postwar performing arts center deserves a more flexible preservation strategy whereby these flaws may be corrected while maintaining distinct areas of significance.

Intent

As preservation advocacy has expanded to include select buildings or building groupings of the modern movement, so have ideas about preserving them. In contrast to conventional preservation practices which have been focused on the retention of original materials and form, preservationists of modern buildings have recommended a broader application of policy. For example, the International Working Party for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites, and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement, otherwise known as DOCOMOMO, has acknowledged that modern, mass-produced materials often do not have the same longevity as traditional materials used in older buildings. Consequently, DOCOMOMO advises durability

and availability of materials as necessary considerations in addressing conservation needs.

In their presentation concerning modern buildings at the NARA Conference on Authenticity in 1994, DOCOMOMO founder H.A.J. Henket and his colleague, N. Tummers, stated that “due to ever increasing performance requirements, buildings become functionally (and esthetically) outdated faster than ever before. Both these aspects create great tensions with the ideology of sustainability. The fact is that the best examples of the Modern Movement fit the idea of sustainability least.”²³ Nevertheless, the modern proponents urged that “authentic and irreplaceable example[s] of the Modern Movement” that are “of utmost importance...should be brought back to [their] original state” while less distinctive yet significant buildings be conserved through more “pragmatic” means.²⁴

Perhaps the most enlightening aspect of DOCOMOMO’s prescription for the preservation of modern buildings concerns its emphasis on intent. Reiterating the pioneering ideas espoused by LeCorbusier concerning the role of architecture as a tool for social reform, the organization stresses adherence to an “authenticity of concept (i.e. the social and cultural intentions) of the original design and realisation [sic]” which, it claims, “forms the most important aspect of the preservation of 20th century architecture and urban planning.”²⁵ Echoing this pronouncement, Theo Prudon, architect and President of DOCOMOMO US, also urged the need to “respect the original architects’ design intent.”²⁶

Functionality

Adopting DOCOMOMO's more practical approach toward the preservation of modern buildings, the General Services Administration has been in the process of determining the most appropriate and effective means of dealing with its own portfolio of postwar structures. Between 1960 and 1976, the GSA commissioned over 700 buildings across the country, which consisted of a range of building types, including office buildings, courthouses, libraries, laboratories, museums and border stations.²⁷ Designed to embody values of "dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American National Government," a few of these structures, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development headquarters in Washington, D.C. and a Federal courthouse in Chicago, were even designed by internationally-renowned architects Marcel Breuer and Mies van der Rohe, respectively.²⁸

However, in spite of the aspirations associated with these buildings and others—which, according to the agency, were "often regarded as landmarks" at the time they were built—much of the GSA's commercial portfolio has received harsh criticism in the intervening years. Categorizing much of its office space, the agency noted, "Looking back on this legacy as a group, the projects represent a Federal office building style that is massive, boxy, and disengaged from the city, edifices critics have referred to as 'debased, reductive' versions of the Modern aesthetic."²⁹ So, too, has the American postwar performing arts center been criticized for its design and physical isolation from its immediate community. In his scathing indictment, art critic, Bernard Leitner, wrote how cultural center architects have "fall[en] back on eye-catching

solutions” in which “‘meaningfulness’ is achieved through big scale and rich materials.”³⁰ Leitner continues:

Using outdated historical elements in a tour-de-force design brings such centers closer to dictatorial architecture than to any kind of democratic architecture. In dictatorial architecture the size of an architectural element is always more important than its meaning. The result, therefore, is always banal.³¹

Whereas Leitner has failed appreciate both the historic significance of these campuses and their ability to serve their communities, the GSA has worked toward a more balanced approach that assesses its buildings’ strengths and weaknesses.

Intent on establishing guidelines for the stewardship of its buildings, the GSA has partnered with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the American Architectural Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Yale University School of Architecture, to gather input from these agencies and organizations, as well as from leading architects, planners, consultants and historians. Having thus far held two forums on the subject of their “architecture of the Great Society,” the GSA has begun to ask questions, make assessments and propose preservation and redevelopment strategies.³² Among some of the questions posed at its first conference that bear particular relevance to the American postwar performing arts center were:

- How should the agency evaluate quality?
- What do these buildings say about [their owner] in the 21st century?
- Do they build a bridge between the public and public service?

- Do these buildings enhance their environments and enrich their communities with good public space?
- Are they good work environments?
- What can be done to enhance and upgrade these buildings?
- When can they be renovated?
- To what extent can facades, systems, and technologies be changed and modernized?³³

Understandably, responses to these questions varied. However, conference participants did agree that education of design and intent, authenticity, durability and functionality were solid criteria for redeveloping these buildings.

Regarding functionality, David Woodcock, Professor of Architecture at Texas A&M University, referenced Stewart Brand's *How Buildings Learn*, arguing that "Site and Structure remain relatively stable. Skin and Services become obsolete within a moderate time frame. Space Planning and Stuff (contents) change almost constantly" and "are particularly affected by technological changes demanded by users."³⁴ Dirk Lohan, architect and Mies van der Rohe's grandson, proclaimed that the icons of the modern movement should be "preserved and restored in the spirit of their creators" while "the vast majority of Modern buildings should be creatively reinvented with new facades, new plans, and new uses."³⁵ As drastic as Lohan's recommendation was, he had the support of other professionals such as architect, Barton Myers, who alluded to Renaissance models in Europe whereby "architects routinely reworked existing buildings, gave them new life, and created marvelous works of architecture."³⁶

In its summary of the first forum's proceedings, GSA noted how "many participants supported the attitude that GSA should not view its inventory of Modern office buildings as "something precious" but to make sure that they are "up-to-date,

competitive, and serving the needs of clients.”³⁷ Furthermore, the summary concluded, “To the degree that the buildings represent an investment of money and resources, the bias should be toward conservation and renewal” however, “if quality and function are judged as weak, then GSA should, at least, consider more radical options.”³⁸

In its second forum, GSA proposed a means by which to resolve the conflict between preservation and redevelopment. As attorney and preservationist, Robert Peck, stated, “a balance between functional and safety concerns and history” should be the agency’s overall goal.³⁹ Devising a three-tiered strategy, the forum’s panel proposed analyses of GSA’s postwar buildings based on the original architect’s intent; changes which have occurred over time within the building and its context; and the particular tenants’ and clients’ current and future needs.⁴⁰ After these questions have been addressed, the panel urged design solutions that would respect the building’s historical, architectural and cultural significance while, at the same time, improve its functional, technological and energy-related aspects based on life-cycle costs and economic feasibility. Throughout the process, the panel stressed the importance of understanding what needs are to be met, and how they may be creatively addressed in an appropriate and respectful fashion.⁴¹

Character-Defining Elements and Areas

Consistent with its goals of respecting a building’s historic, architectural and cultural significance in the face of redevelopment, the GSA has referenced guidelines published by the U.S. Department of the Interior that enable the agency to visually

inventory these physical manifestations. Entitled “Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character,” the Department of Interior’s preservation brief describes three ways in which buildings can be visually understood.⁴² The first step in the process entails an identification of a building’s overall character without focusing on details. Among these visual attributes are its setting, its shape, any openings, projections, recesses or voids, and exterior materials. In addition, the brief suggests first viewing the property from a distance and then surveying all sides of it in order to make these assessments.

Secondly, a closer inspection should be performed so that character can be visually identified at close range. In this step, the guidelines recommend identifying all of the surface qualities of the building materials, including color, texture and any distinctive craftsmanship employed in their execution. The final step consists of a survey of the building’s interior spaces to not only document features and finishes, but also its plans. Regarding the design of these interior spaces, the brief notes how important a building’s configuration is to understanding its cultural and historical significance, whether it be the axial plan of a church or the processional plan of a hotel lobby, to name a few examples.

The Case for Redevelopment

Like the GSA’s determination to make its collection of buildings from the Great Society as inviting, functional and accessible as possible while honoring their particular physical attributes of significance, so, too, should stewards of the American postwar performing arts center be able to balance these same goals with preservation.

As previously discussed, the buildings and building groupings comprising these cultural centers were physical embodiments of an increasing arts patronage and awareness in the country, bolstered by unprecedented public-private participation and political and private aspirations to make America a contender in the international cultural arena.

Yet, these aspects of significance cannot overshadow the fact that these performing arts institutions have a mission that not only entails making the arts accessible, but also to create an environment whereby the arts can flourish. Like their counterparts, which continue to evolve in some of the most magnificent performance halls and theaters of 19th- and early 20th- century America, the organizations managing postwar performing arts centers should encourage their buildings' revitalization. As architectural critic, C. Ray Smith, so eloquently stated in his preliminary review of the plan for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

The activity of monument-visiting is a pilgrimage made in somewhat quiet, detached, and nostalgic reverence; whereas theatre-going, as we all know, is a social mixing in the hubbub of things, a crowd gathering, a riotous mass meeting. A theatre must be a theatre, not the symbol of a theatre.⁴³

Thus, the task for preservationists of the American postwar performing arts center should entail the fulfillment of both preservation and programmatic goals, through the creation of an expanded criterion of utility and intent.

A Nationwide Programmatic Agreement

The most effective means whereby an expanded criterion could be introduced would be through the creation of a Programmatic Agreement. As amended under the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Section 106 Regulations, Programmatic Agreements are standard documents that enable property owners undertaking work on historic buildings to streamline the review process through previously authorized guidelines for rehabilitation. Furthermore, as per a recent revision in the regulations concerning their execution, a single Programmatic Agreement may be applied to a particular building or building group type—nationwide—thereby allowing for a universal standard of preservation policy.

As a contract between stewards of American postwar performing arts centers and state preservation officers, the Programmatic Agreement has the capacity to detail what would be permissible with regard to their future redevelopment.⁴⁴ As previously noted, one of the criterion for preservation would involve the retention of character-defining features, and specifically what comprises them. On the other hand, given the fact that an expanded criterion based on utility and intent could adversely affect these features, it becomes necessary to offer guidance in the Programmatic Agreement to resolve such conflicts.

One of the most effective means of reconciliation would be through an analysis of building histories and critical assessments as a means of understanding the success of these buildings, both architecturally and programmatically. Given the fact that National Register Nominations require such narrative histories and assessments in

support of listing, similar weight should be accorded to these documents in terms of their viability as functioning public plazas, concert halls, opera houses and theaters. Furthermore, construction histories can also be a means of understanding how utility and intent was either realized or compromised in existing designs, and whether or not, based on critical response, original goals have been fulfilled.

The programmatic goals of these venues should be honored, and an expanded criterion which takes them into consideration is essential to their futures as vital performance spaces. In discussing his firm's restoration of Radio City Music Hall, architect, Hugh Hardy, of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, maintained, "What one wants to do in a restoration is provide a total experience that feels correct."⁴⁵ For the patron of a performing arts facility, the experience one has should be both visceral and physical, so that experience is not just limited to visual stimulation, but aural, tactile and spatial sensation as well. By heeding Robert Peck's advice to strike "a balance between functional and safety concerns and history," it is possible to devise preservation and redevelopment strategies that will not only honor the original missions of these complexes in the 20th century, but also in the 21st.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Change is as inevitable...": Kay D. Weeks, Technical Preservation Services, "New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns," *Preservation Briefs*, No. 14, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. "A property...": W. Brown Morton, III, Gary L. Hume, Kay D. Weeks, and H. Ward Jandl, "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1976/reprinted 1997) p.vi.
- ² Lewis Mumford, "Medieval Urban Housekeeping: Civic Nucleus and Neighborhood," in *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformation and Its Prospects*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961) p.312.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁵ Quoted in "Modern Preservation," *Oculus*, April 2000, v.62, no.8, p.10.
- ⁶ Arthur Cotton Moore, "Introduction," *The Powers of Preservation*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998) p.xi.
- ⁷ Paul Spencer Byard, "Afterword," *The Architecture of Additions: Design and Regulation*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) p.182.
- ⁸ *ibid.*, p.85.
- ⁹ The most recent modifications to these venues were as follows: Carnegie Hall: \$60 million restoration - 1986-1990 (currently undergoing below-grade expansion); Radio City Music Hall: \$70 million restoration -1999-2000; Orchestra Hall: \$110 million renovation and expansion - 1995-97; Civic Opera House: \$100 million renovation - 1993-96; Academy of Music: six-phase, multi-million dollar renovation - 1994- .
- ¹⁰ The most recent modifications of these venues were as follows: The Royal Opera House at Covent Garden: 1997-99; Old Vic Theatre: 1983; Paris Opera House: 1995; La Scala: 2002- .
- ¹¹ Quoted in Tim Page, "Gone Today, Hear Tomorrow," *The Washington Post*, January 26, 1997, p.G1.
- ¹² Architect Philip Johnson responded, "the theater 'was never meant to be used for the spoken word, unless the sound is reinforced.'" In spite of Johnson's assurance, the theater has also been panned for its poor acoustics as an opera house, prompting New York City Opera's general manager to install an amplification system in the auditorium. Peter Brook and Philip Johnson, as quoted in Louis Calta, "Acoustics Scored At State Theater," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1964, p.36.
- ¹³ Page, "Gone Today, Hear Tomorrow," p.G1.
- ¹⁴ Quoted and recounted in Don Shirley, "Taking an Early Peek at the New Ahmanson," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 15, 1994, p.F1.
- ¹⁵ Clive Barnes, "Lincoln Center: Bravos and Barbs for America's Number One Cultural Supermarket," *Holiday*, September 1968, p.92.
- ¹⁶ James S. Russell, "Is It Curtains for Lincoln Center," *Grid*, Summer 1999, v.1, n.3, p.114.
- ¹⁷ C. Ray Smith, "The National Museum of Performing Culture," *Theatre Design and Technology*, February 1968, n.12, p.23.
- ¹⁸ Harold Schonberg, "Six Architects in Search of a Center," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 8, 1959, VI, p.22.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.24.
- ²⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ²¹ It bears noting that a "tour de force" is defined in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as "a feat of strength or virtuosity," thereby demonstrating the extent of Harrison's refusal to acknowledge the shortcomings of the collaborative process when pitted against a single vision. William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980) p.1358.

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- ²² One recurring problem that has been linked to a modern design aesthetic is poor acoustics. For example, Avery Fisher Hall's lack of ornamentation, coupled with its planar surfaces, has been partially to blame for its acoustical problems. Compared to Boston Symphony Hall, whose statuary lining the auditorium acts as sound diffusers, Avery Fisher Hall's lack of any such ornamentation prevents any effective sound deflection. Bruce Bliven, Jr., "Annals of Architecture: A Better Sound," *The New Yorker*, November 8, 1976, v.52, pp.63-64.
- ²³ H.A.J. Henket and N. Tummers, "Authenticity of the Modern Movement," *NARA Conference On Authenticity*, Nara, Japan, November 1-6, 1994, (Japan: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995) p.328.
- ²⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁵ *ibid.*
- ²⁶ Quoted in "Architecture of the Great Society: Assessing the GSA Portfolio of Buildings Constructed during the 1960s and 1970s," *Summary of Comments and Issues From a Forum Convened at Yale University's Center for British Art*, December 5, 2000, p.21.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, pp.2-3.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p.2.
- ²⁹ *ibid.*, p.3.
- ³⁰ Bernard Leitner, "Cultural Centers: Magic Architecture," *Art in America*, September 1972, v.60, p.93.
- ³¹ *ibid.*
- ³² *ibid.*, p.1.
- ³³ *ibid.*, pp.3-4.
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p.11.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, p.11.
- ³⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.4.
- ³⁷ *ibid.*, p.13.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*, p.13.
- ³⁹ Quoted in "Architecture of the Great Society: Strategies for Evaluation and Stewardship," *Summary of Comments and Issues From a Panel Discussion convened at GSA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.*, February 22, 2001, p.23.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp.24-25.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*, 25.
- ⁴² Lee H. Nelson, "Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character," *Preservation Briefs*, No. 17, Technical Preservation Services, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.
- ⁴³ Smith, "The National Museum of Performing Culture," p.23.
- ⁴⁴ According to Section 800.14(b) of the *Revised Section 106 Regulations, Final Rule*, the President of the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers must authorize the Programmatic Agreement in order for it to be considered valid. Section 800.14(b), *Revised Section 106 Regulations, Final Rule*, at www.achp.gov/regspreamble.html.
- ⁴⁵ Quoted in "Splendor Restored," *RCE: Radio City Music Hall History Restoration*, at www.radiocity.com/b1d1.html.

CHAPTER 4

LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS: A CASE STUDY

Called “the mother of all performing arts centers” by *New York Times* architecture critic, Herbert Muschamp, Lincoln Center has been a prototype of the American postwar performing arts center, as well as prototypical of the problems confronting them.¹ In spite of its renown, the center has continually been the subject of controversy. As early as 1968, one year before the completion of its performing arts campus, *New York Times* theater critic, Clive Barnes, wrote, “It is curious that Lincoln Center met with hardly any opposition while it was being planned, but once it was built and operating, it became a continual Aunt Sally, with almost everyone taking pot shots at its architecture, its constituent companies, its overall planning, its subscription systems, even its catering facilities.”² On the other hand, architectural historians, such as Robert A.M. Stern, have lauded the complex as “the most ambitious and successful attempt at traditional large-scale urban placemaking to have been realized since Rockefeller Center.”³ Renowned yet reviled, Lincoln Center is a paradox that not only demands attention, but moreover, scrutiny, as its parent organization devises ways to adapt its ensemble of monumental buildings, park and plazas to the 21st century.

Ironically, in spite of one substantial overhaul and several lesser alterations to its interior spaces and landscaping, Lincoln Center’s original campus and buildings

are, for the most part, largely intact.⁴ However, in an effort to correct purported flaws in its original design, modernize outmoded facilities and introduce additions to its existing buildings in order to meet expanding needs, its parent organization has proposed “Blueprint for the Future,” a redevelopment scheme which, when realized, will cost an estimated 1.2 billion dollars.⁵ Sweeping in scope with the capacity to alter the historic campus substantially through cosmetic and structural overhauls, and new development, these proposals also highlight the center’s inadequacies and posit how stewards of American postwar performing arts centers should respond. In their letter to the *New York Times*, DOCOMOMO President and board member, Theodore Prudon and Nina Rappaport, maintained:

Functional necessities were as critical to the Lincoln Center architects as the forms they created, and the Modernist movement relied on new visual forms to clarify and express function. It is within that context that we must find inspiration for our architecture and preservation efforts when Modernist buildings are at hand. This challenge for collaboration (and occasional compromise) at Lincoln Center may well set a valuable precedent for sensitive improvements to other complexes in New York...⁶

Referencing DOCOMOMO’s more liberal ideology toward the preservation of modern buildings, Prudon and Rappaport have encouraged the stewards of Lincoln Center to engage in a dialogue with preservationists of modern architecture as a means of meeting their constituents’ programmatic needs in an appropriate manner.

Given the complexity of the Lincoln Center organization’s proposals, the focus of this case study will be on several prominent issues which embody themes concerning the redevelopment of postwar performing arts centers. Exploring

individual problems specific to areas of design, planning, public space, materials and new development, I will assess the current plans for redevelopment and propose possible remedies through the application of an expanded preservation criterion based on utility and intent.



13. Lincoln Center Plaza,
now Josie Robertson Plaza
Philharmonic Hall, now Avery Fisher Hall
Max Abramovitz (1962)



15. Metropolitan Opera House
Wallace K. Harrison (1969)



17. Vivian Beaumont Theater
Eero Saarinen (1965)



14. New York State Theater
Philip Johnson (1964)



16. The Juilliard School
Pietro Belluschi
Eduardo Catalano
Helge Westermann
(1969)



18. Library for the Performing Arts
Gordon Bunshaft (1965)

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Herbert Muschamp, "Lincoln Center's Next Big Production: Itself," *The New York Times*, January 21, 1102001, II, p.46.
- ² Clive Barnes, "Lincoln Center: Bravos and Barbs for America's Number One Cultural Supermarket," *Holiday*, September 1968, p.40.
- ³ Robert A.M. Stern, letter to Bernadette Castro, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, in support of National Register listing for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, July 19, 2000.
- ⁴ Avery Fisher Hall's auditorium has had one gut rehabilitation, and three renovations since it opened in 1962, while the Library for the Performing Arts, New York State Theater, the Vivian Beaumont and Mitzi E. Newhouse Theaters, and select areas within the Juilliard School have had moderate to substantial renovations since their openings.
- ⁵ Evan and Freda Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake In A Cultural Crossroads," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2001, II, p.1. Most of the buildings and all of the art at Lincoln Center are owned by Lincoln Center, Inc., excluding the New York State Theater, the performing arts library and the center's park and plazas, connections to the adjacent community and below-grade infrastructure, which are all owned by the City of New York.
- ⁶ Theodore Prudon and Nina Rappaport, "Keep What's There," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2001, II, p.2.

A. Expansion of the Metropolitan Opera House Lobby

The proposed lobby expansion of Wallace K. Harrison's Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center exemplifies how an expanded preservation criterion may be effective in both meeting functional demands while honoring original design intent. Completed in fall 1966, the opera house was a significant commission for Harrison, who was not only a guiding influence in the design of the Lincoln Center campus, but also in the creation of the United Nations Headquarters. Highly prolific in the realm of corporate architecture, Harrison was trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and embraced Louis Sullivan's modern architectural dictum that a building's form should express its function. Having worked on unrealized proposals for a new Metropolitan Opera House at Rockefeller Center, among other locations, he was ultimately chosen for the Lincoln Center commission to devise something that was monumental in stature and state-of-the-art in function.

Echoes of the City Beautiful Movement

Although Lincoln Center was the product of the largest ensemble of modern planners and architects to have ever collaborated on a single project, its planning and design were based on principles of the City Beautiful Movement. According to Gail Fenske, this was defined as an "American urban planning movement directed towards achieving a cultural parity with the cities of Europe, led by architects, landscape architects and reformers."¹ Similarly, after Lincoln Center's first performance hall opened on September 23, 1962, *The New York Times* enthused that the complex had

the capacity to be “the world’s most influential cultural oasis, embracing the best talent from all the performing arts that this country has to offer.”²

A late-Modernist design consistent with America’s City Beautiful Movement, Lincoln Center eschewed a principle tenet of the modern movement’s founder, Le Corbusier, that stressed social reform over beautification. Instead, the center’s design team incorporated Beaux Arts-inspired principles ideally suited for municipal projects, which stressed monumentality and classicism to uplift, enlighten and inspire awe. As a precedent for Lincoln Center’s planners and designers, the City Beautiful Movement—especially as realized in the White City at the Columbia Exposition—became an ideal prototype for the creation of an iconic cultural destination. William H. Jordy wrote:

[Although the] formal qualities of Lincoln Center generally characterize all classically inspired architecture, its most immediate prototypes for American architects are Beaux-Arts buildings. So Lincoln Center brings the tradition of American Beaux-Arts full circle, back to the Court of Honor at the Columbia Exposition of 1892. Or, a circle within a circle: if Rockefeller Center had marked the arc from Beaux-Arts to modern, so the later Center marks the arc from modern back to Beaux-Arts, with Wallace Harrison among the principal participants in both enterprises.³

From the outset of the project, Harrison was not only committed to making the overall center a showcase for culture, but also the Metropolitan Opera House its focal point. Placing it at the terminus of the main axis running across the Upper West Side community at West 64th Street, the opera house was always planned to visually dominate the complex.⁴

In addition, there were other aspects of the center consistent with Beaux Arts principles, such as the architects’ conscious intent of processionalism in its overall site

plan and within its buildings. Promoting this aspect of design, Lincoln Center architect Philip Johnson said, "Architecture is surely not the design of space, certainly not the massing or organizing of volumes. These are auxiliary to the main point which is the organization of procession."⁵ Not surprisingly, many critics, including *New York Times* architecture critic, Ada Louise Huxtable, observed this tangible phenomenon at the Metropolitan Opera House. Despite her disappointment with its overall design, she offered: "At night, the movement on the grand stair and promenades, seen through the lighted glass façade, defines the building's scale impressively and suggests a sparkling gala party."⁶ Emulating the work of his Beaux Arts predecessor, Charles Garnier's Paris Opera House (1861-1875), Harrison sought to create a building that was as intricate in its function and sequence of space—if not as lavish in its appearance. Opting for a modern, abstracted version which substituted unadorned angles and curves in place of Baroque ornamentation, Harrison's incarnation featured a double-curved grand staircase that referenced the form and intent of Garnier's version.

Compromise

Between 1955 and 1962, Harrison worked on a series of proposals for the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center that attest to his extraordinary creativity.⁷ However, in spite of his capacity to deliver a succession of cutting-edge, modern proposals, Harrison's final work was severely compromised. After countless renderings and drawings, the architect was given an ultimatum in 1961 by the opera house's building committee: either modify his proposed design to accommodate the

capped budget or forfeit the job to another designer.⁸ Harrison reluctantly complied, and among the many casualties was the elimination of 25% of the lobby area.⁹ As a result, this reduction has led to several substantial programmatic problems that include overly congested public areas, increased humidity and a jarred perspective of the Chagall artwork.

On September 16, 1966, at the opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House, Harrison ambiguously proclaimed, "The Metropolitan Opera House will represent what the people wanted who supported opera in the middle of the twentieth century in New York."¹⁰ The following day, in her review, Ada Louise Huxtable referred to it as a "monument manqué," that was "a sterile throwback rather than creative 20th-century design."¹¹ She also stated that "Architecturally...in the sense of the exhilarating and beautiful synthesis of structure and style that produces the great buildings of our age, it is not a modern opera house at all."¹²

However, Huxtable also defended Harrison in her review, quoting the architect as saying, "We couldn't have a modern house. I finally got hammered down by the opera people. I personally would have liked to have found some way around it, but my client wouldn't have liked that at all."¹³ Huxtable herself further maintained, "The possibilities existed for logic, clarity, exciting contemporaneity and strong visual drama. Reams of drawings testify to the effort..."¹⁴ Commenting on the drawbacks of design by committee, the critic lamented "the dirgelike refrain to which design quality and architectural excellence are being buried all over the United States."¹⁵

But Huxtable was not the only critic who mourned the Met's absence of "strong visual drama." Years later, Robert Zwirn, writing in *Metropolis*, voiced a similar

complaint and pointed up the opera house's shortcomings in relation to its plaza grouping:

At the scale of the plaza this has resulted in a gaping open space between buildings, allowing the plaza to unceremoniously dribble out into adjacent areas. The visual impact is thus diluted. At the scale of the building it leaves the Met with far too small a foyer, eliminating any sense of grand arrival and procession, which is clearly what Harrison has in mind...The three major buildings at Lincoln Center, which purport to be both formal and monumental, are merely rendered large and ponderous.¹⁶

Thus, not only did the opera house fail aesthetically and programmatically, it also failed to fulfill the intentions of its Beaux-Arts prototype by mitigating the center's overall visual impact.

Because of these multiple inadequacies, expanding preservation criterion to include utility and original intent could establish a framework within which these problems could be remedied. Applying a broader preservation approach could be a means of correcting a substantial functional deficiency of the Metropolitan Opera House while honoring its architect's original intent. Since statements made by the architect and critics can attest to the fact that Harrison's design was compromised, a compelling case could be made that the reconstitution of this lobby would be consistent with the authenticity of utility and intent. Moreover, it has been discovered that the original façade piers exist below grade, most likely owing to the fact that Harrison was forced to reduce this space after construction on the project had already begun.¹⁷

Preservation Precedent

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, there has also been precedent for this broader application of preservation. In their 1911 design of the Main Concourse for Grand Central Terminal, the architects, Warren & Wetmore, included a pair of staircases on both the eastern and western sides of the room. However, due to the fact that an office tower that the staircase was supposed to connect to was never constructed, the stairs were not included in the building's final design when it was completed in 1913. When the building was restored at the turn of the 21st century, John Belle, architect of the restoration, made a case for reinstating Warren & Wetmore's eastern staircase based on original intent, utility and its consistency with the building's overall Beaux-Arts style. Belle asked rhetorically, "Why would we turn away from giving the building back the one missing element to Warren's intended symmetry?"¹⁸

However, according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, this reconstitution of the staircase was not consistent with its preservation guidelines which stressed authenticity of form and materials over intent. Speaking on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Office, Julian Adams, articulated the federal agency's concerns:

Over the years, guidance on the Standards have always recommended against 'completing designs.' The building as constructed is the historical record of its time, and shows either budgetary, technological, or aesthetic influences, judgements, or constraints. To complete the design negates that history and creates a 'false' sense of history, always recommended against in the standards."¹⁹

Nevertheless, the historic preservation office allowed the reconstitution of the eastern stairway based on Belle's arguments. The issue itself, according to Belle, "became a trial that illustrated the many changes the Terminal would need to go through in order to function as well in the twenty-first century as it had in the twentieth century."²⁰

The demolition and reconstitution of one of the most iconic elements of Lincoln Center would undoubtedly arouse as much controversy within the preservation community as Beyer Blinder Belle's proposal to reconstitute Grand Central Terminal's eastern staircase. Prevailing preservation ethics, based on retention of physical materials and form, would be pitted against more idealized notions, especially as espoused by Violet LeDuc. Yet, central to this debate should be an examination of what these centers aspired to do, what their architects intended, the extent to which their designs have been realized and how their buildings have been perceived as a consequence of what was built. As noted, if written accounts and critiques are going to form the basis for designation, then these same documents should be given equal weight to ascertain programmatic success—which should be just as compelling to justify the need for change.

Unlike most of their historic counterparts, which have been revered for their outstanding functional qualities, the American postwar performing arts facilities have had harsh criticisms lodged at them, suggesting imperfections in original designs that have fallen short of their creators' aspirations. Correcting these flaws would not only fulfill these aspirations, but also contribute to their historic significance as bold experiments that could succeed with appropriate modifications. Paul Byard wrote, "Every act of preservation is inescapably an act of renewal by the light of a later time,

a set of decisions both about what we think something was and about what we want it to be and to say about ourselves today.”²¹ Expanding the lobby so that it fulfills the role it was supposed to as a processional space culminating in the production inside, would be a desirable “act of renewal” for one of the world’s most celebrated opera companies.

Regarding the form the new façade should take, the most fitting design would be a modern interpretation of the arched original which would memorialize Harrison’s vision. In his firm’s design of the eastern staircase at Grand Central Terminal, John Belle stated their goal was to “build the staircase as closely as possible to Warren & Wetmore’s original idea, adding small changes to reflect changes” as a means of “signal[ing] to the contemporary viewer that [the staircase] was built at the end of the twentieth century and not at the beginning.”²² Similarly, the expanded lobby façade of the Metropolitan Opera House should be a record of its time that continues to visually dominate the complex without overpowering it.

A Preservation Solution

Expanding the Metropolitan Opera House lobby so that it reflects Wallace K. Harrison’s original intent would not only solve programmatic problems, it would also produce a stronger overall visual impact, thereby reinforcing the campus’ significance as a modern incarnation of the City Beautiful Movement. As architectural critic, Herbert Muschamp wrote regarding the proposed development at Lincoln Center, “Architecture, too, is a performing art. Like procession, it unfolds in time as well as space.”²³ Given the functional inadequacies of the existing opera house lobby;

Wallace K. Harrison's public statements against what got built; compelling physical evidence attesting to his original intent; and the existing structure's inconsistency with the City Beautiful principles which informed the center's overall plan; a strong case could be made to improve upon the existing design.

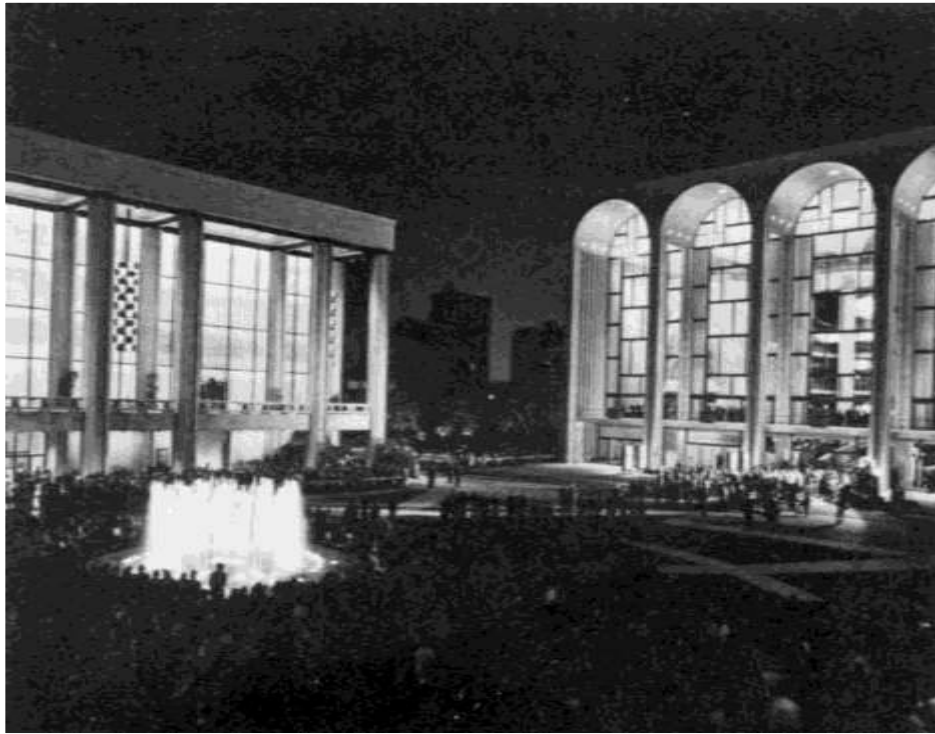
As a case study relevant to other American postwar performing arts centers, the lobby expansion proposal demonstrates how intent can offer a standard of appropriateness with regard to new additions. Induced by programmatic needs and supportable by historical analysis, these solutions, attuned to the needs of the American postwar performing arts center, transcend conventional preservation ethics which are limited to authentic forms and materials. In doing so, these changes not only allow the performing arts to flourish as they were intended to, but also reinforce historical significance as original aspirations are at last realized.



19. Columbia Exposition of 1892



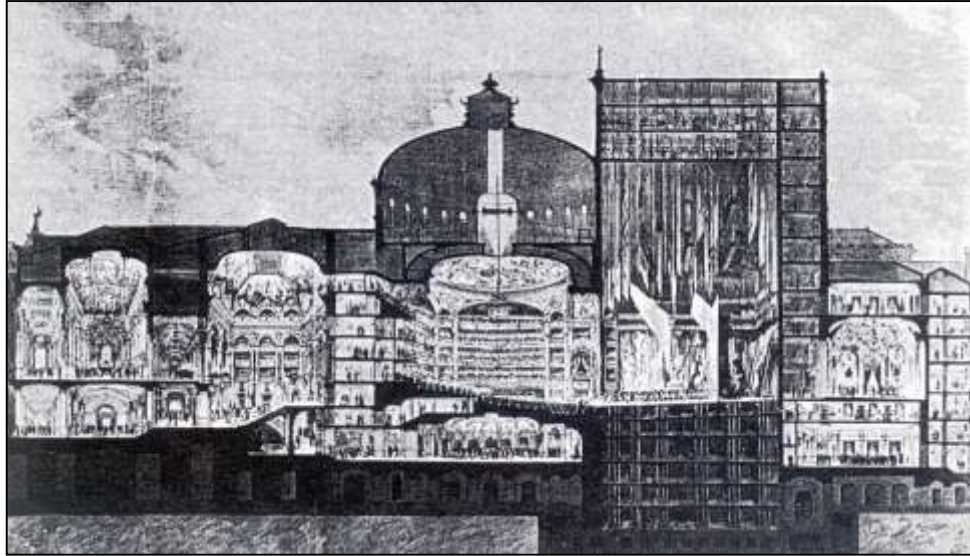
20. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
Metropolitan Opera House, center.



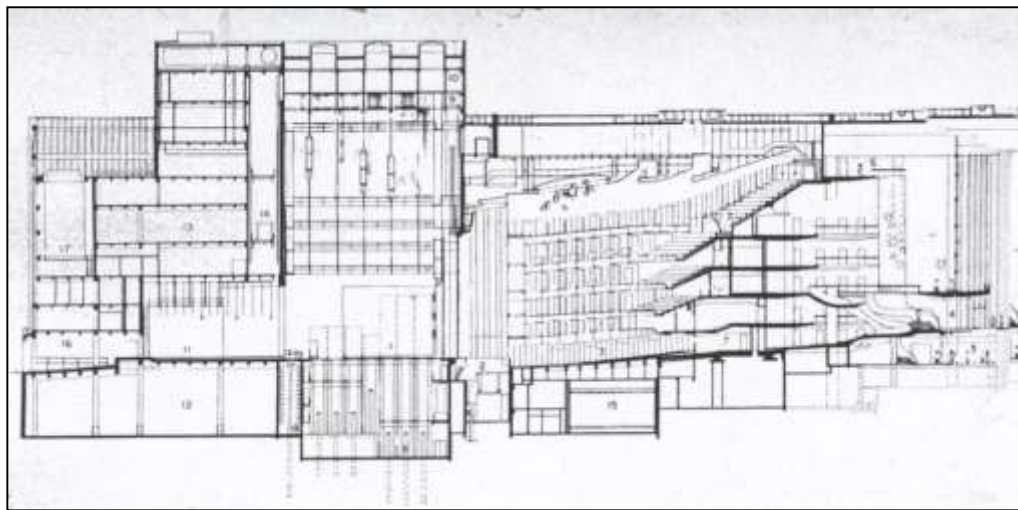
21. Josie Robertson Plaza, view toward New York State Theater & Metropolitan Opera House



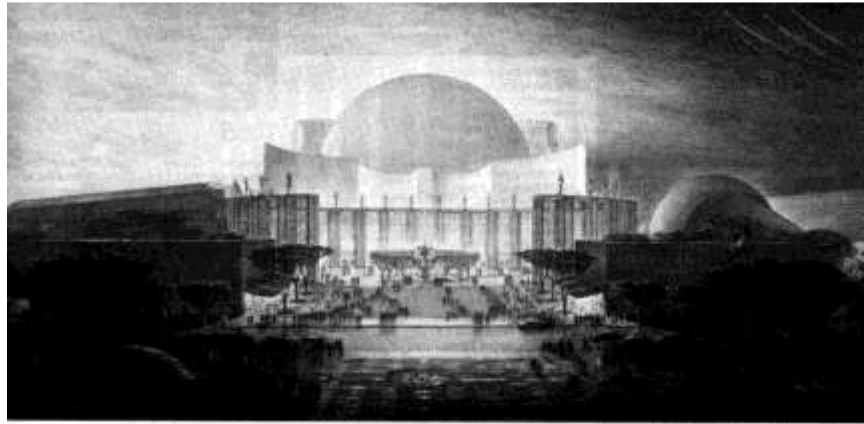
22. Unrealized mall, linking Lincoln Center to Central Park (Proposed, 1966)



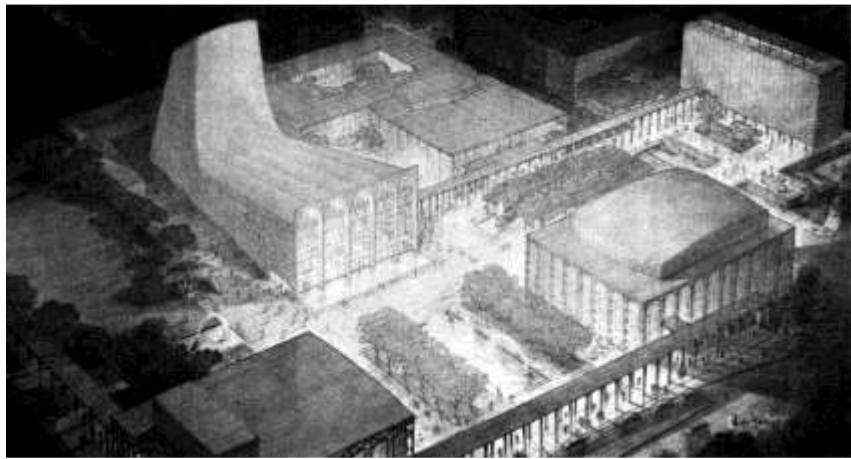
23. Paris Opera House, section



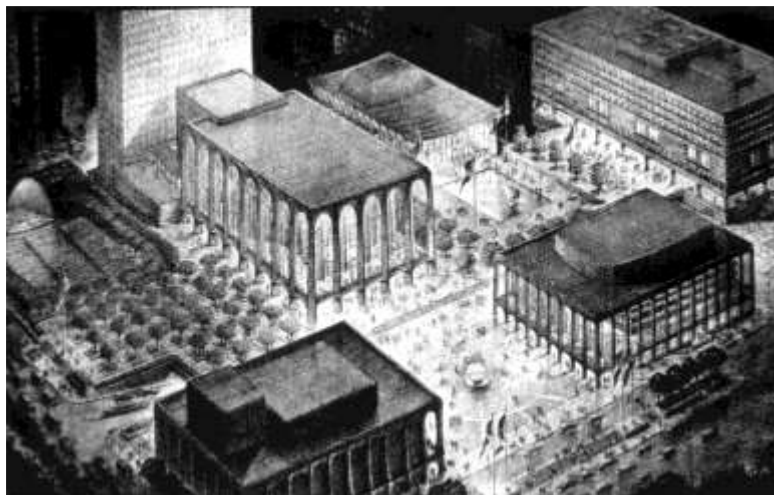
24. Metropolitan Opera House, section



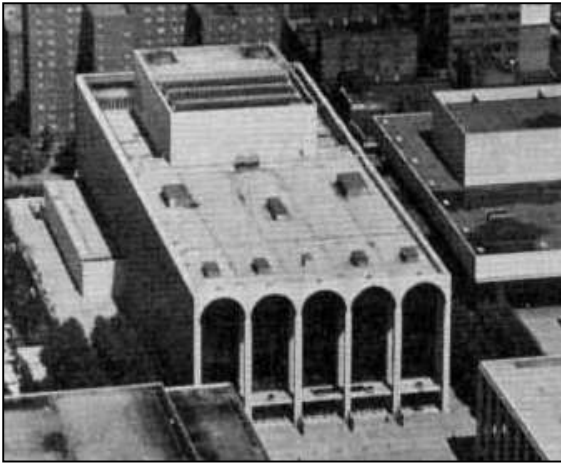
25. Wallace K. Harrison, proposal for Lincoln Center;
Metropolitan Opera House, center (1956).



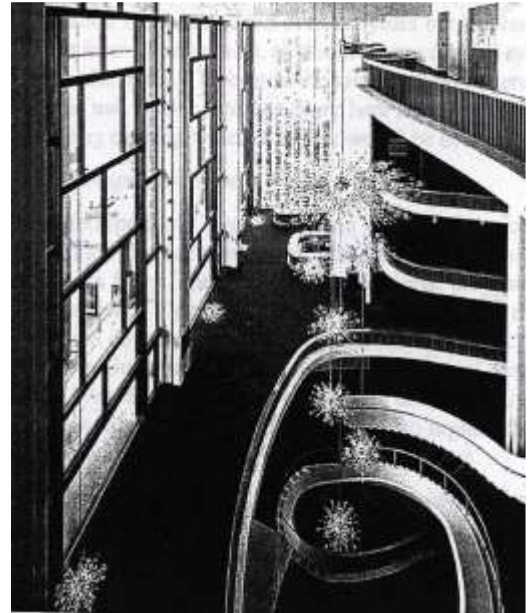
26. Wallace K. Harrison, proposal for Lincoln Center;
Metropolitan Opera House, center (1959).



27. Wallace K. Harrison, proposal for Lincoln Center;
Metropolitan Opera House, center (1960).



28. Metropolitan Opera House



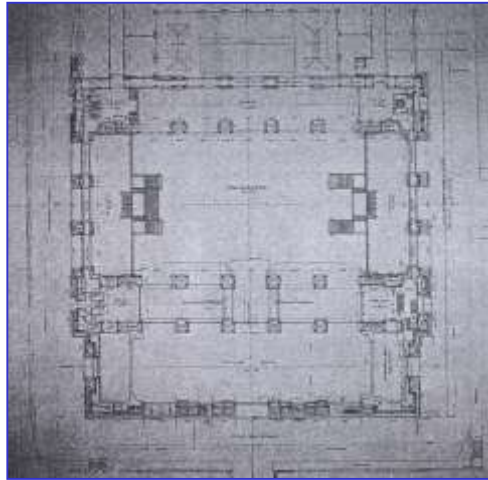
29. Metropolitan Opera House
Lobby Interior, Promenade



30. Metropolitan Opera House
Plaza view of Marc Chagall's
Le Triomphe de Musique



31. Metropolitan Opera House
Lobby Interior, Intermission



32. Grand Central Terminal
Warren & Wetmore 1911 Drawing



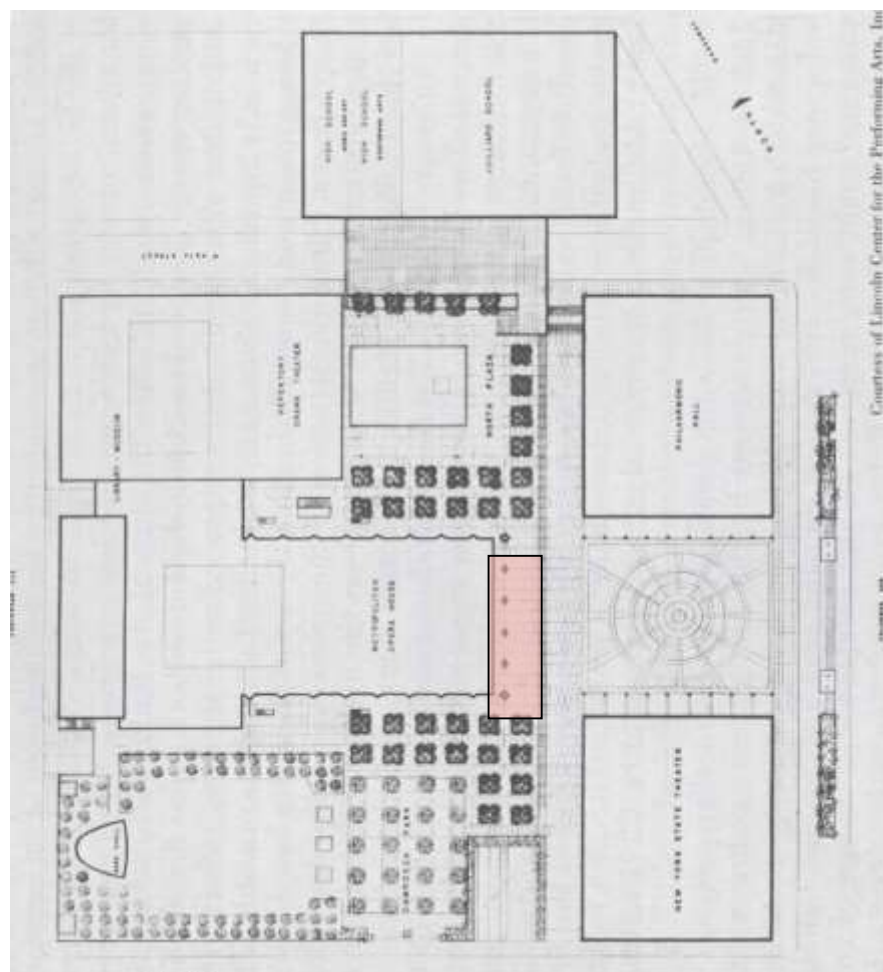
33. Grand Central Terminal, view east of Baggage Counter Room



34. Grand Central Terminal, view east of new staircases



35. Metropolitan Opera House forecourt, view north



36. Lincoln Center plan
Rectangle showing area of proposed lobby expansion

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Gail Fenske, "City Beautiful Movement," in Jane Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*, (New York: MacMillan Publishers Limited, 1996) v.7, p.357.
- ² Arthur Gelb, "A Deeper Significance: Full Impact of Lincoln Center Will Not Be Felt Until All Components Open," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1962, p.35.
- ³ William H. Jordy, "What the Building 'Wants to Be:' Kahn, *American Buildings and Their Architects: The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972) pp.387-388.
- ⁴ A preponderance of Wallace K. Harrison's renderings of the Metropolitan Opera House, both at Lincoln Center and before at various other locales, attest to its role as the focal point of the campus.
- ⁵ Quoted in Robert A.M. Stern, "Philip Johnson," *New Directions in American Architecture*, (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1977) p.42.
- ⁶ Ada Louise Huxtable, "Met as Architecture: New House, Although Technically Fine, Muddles a Dramatic Design Concept," *The New York Times*, September 17, 1966, p.17.
- ⁷ For detailed information on the design phase of the Metropolitan Opera House, see Victoria Newhouse, "The Metropolitan Opera House: beginnings," in Wallace K. Harrison, *Architect*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) pp.198-221, and "The Metropolitan Opera House: completion," in *ibid.*, pp.222-235.
- ⁸ According to Rebecca Robertson, Max Abramovitz and Philip Johnson were also given mandates to reduce the size of their buildings. However, in contrast to the Metropolitan Opera House, whose administration was adamant about retaining its backstage facilities, these architects chose to decrease the square footage of those areas. A large part of the redevelopment proposal for these buildings is to reconstitute space that was previously cut. Rebecca Robertson, Lincoln Center Redevelopment Proposal lecture, Political Environment of Development class, Columbia University, March 28, 2002.
- ⁹ Although there were two imposed reductions on his design, the second one in 1961 threatened Harrison's involvement in the project. Taken together, these two cuts represented a 25% overall reduction in the lobby, amounting to a forty-foot loss of space. Andrew Berlinger, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP Project Associate, and co-author, Lincoln Center's *Program and Facility Assessment*, dated December 6, 1999. Interview, December 12, 2001, and E-mail, March 7, 2002.
- ¹⁰ Quoted in Newhouse, "The Metropolitan Opera House: completion," p.233.
- ¹¹ Huxtable, "Met as Architecture: New House, Although Technically Fine, Muddles a Dramatic Design Concept," p.17.
- ¹² *ibid.*
- ¹³ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Robert Zwirn, "Lincoln Center at 20: Six Architects in Search of a Style," *Metropolis*, October 1982, v.2, n.3, p.10.
- ¹⁷ The location of piers underneath the forecourt of the Metropolitan Opera House, similar to the ones supporting the foremost columns of the existing façade, logically suggest that these were either the ones that were intended to support the original façade columns when the foundation was being laid, or were the second choice locations after a former mandated reduction. Andrew Berlinger, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP Project Associate, and co-author, Lincoln Center's *Program and Facility Assessment*, dated December 6, 1999. Interview, December 12, 2001, and E-mail, March 7, 2002.
- ¹⁸ John Belle and Maxinne R. Leighton. *Grand Central: Gateway to a Million Lives*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000) pp.143, 147.
- ¹⁹ Quoted in e-mail to the author, February 12, 2002.
- ²⁰ Belle and Leighton, p.147.

²¹ Paul Spencer Byard, "Afterword," *The Architecture of Additions: Design and Regulation*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) p.182.

²² Belle and Leighton, p.148.

²³ Herbert Muschamp, "Lincoln Center's Next Big Production: Itself," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2001, II, p.47.

B. Planning Issues

Current proposals set forth by Lincoln Center, Inc. to improve vistas and physical access to its complex signal a tangible reconciliation between its founders' rhetoric about inclusiveness and its original design. Like its American postwar counterparts, Lincoln Center represented a vision to consolidate the arts in order to make them more central in the lives of all Americans, and more visible to the public at large. However, as Jane Jacobs and other critics noted, these cultural consolidations, as physically manifested in their superblock designs, resulted in community alienation and isolation.

Early Critics

As early as 1958, when many of these performing arts centers were still in their embryonic phases, Jacobs predicted that "They will be stable and symmetrical and orderly. They will be clean, impressive, and monumental. They will have all the attributes of a well-kept, dignified cemetery."¹ Elaborating on her statement, Jacobs wrote, "These projects will not revitalize downtown; they will deaden it. For they work at cross-purposes to the city. They banish the street. They banish its function. They banish its variety."² Although Jacobs' foreboding prediction concerning economic revitalization was inconclusive, her identification of other urbanistic shortcomings was prescient.

Alluding to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts as a "large, decontaminated island of monuments" in her seminal book on urban planning, *The Death and Life of*

Great American Cities, Jacobs vehemently railed against the entire urban renewal concept that gave birth to it:

To approach a city, or even a city neighborhood, as if it were a larger architectural problem, capable of being given order by converting it into a disciplined work of art, is to make the mistake of attempting to substitute art for life. The results of such profound confusion between art and life are neither life nor art. They are taxidermy. In its place, taxidermy can be a useful and decent craft. However, it goes too far when the specimens put on display are exhibitions of dead, stuffed cities.³

Jacobs' indictment of urban renewal was particularly apt at Lincoln Center where a total of 1,647 families and 383 businesses were uprooted, and 188 buildings were demolished.⁴ Moreover, these statistics reflect only a segment of the larger Lincoln Square Urban Area Renewal Project in which a grand total of 16,732 persons within an eighteen-block radius were permanently evicted.⁵

Ironically, in order to have qualified for its 10.5 million dollar write-down subsidy under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, the burgeoning Lincoln Center organization did not have to provide affordable housing, guarantee employment for the area's unsettled workforce, or even ensure that its arts programming and education would be made accessible and affordable to the general public. Instead, it only had to prove to the local planning commission and board of estimate that its proposed performing arts center would make the city "beautiful as well as sanitary" through its activities of slum clearance and revitalization.⁶ Yet, in spite of the fact that the federal government's provisions did not require the center to have a democratically-focused mission, its proponents maintained that it would.

Lincoln Center's Democratic Mission

Both its future president, William Schuman, and its chairman, John D. Rockefeller, III, promoted the inclusiveness of Lincoln Center, insisting that it would have relevance to underprivileged communities in addition to its middle- and upper-class audiences. Making a case for the center based on its non-material attributes, Schuman maintained:

Communities suffer far more than is generally realized from malnutrition of the spirit—neglect of the cultural diet. The physical slums of any community are all too apparent, and their evil is plain enough. But a community in which the spirit is not fed—where it does not often enough encounter the perfections of the arts—is just as certainly underprivileged.⁷

Concurring with Schuman, Rockefeller declared at the center's dedication that "the arts are not for the privileged few, but for the many. Their place is not on the periphery of daily life, but at its center."⁸ Rockefeller also highlighted the fact that Lincoln Center was the "largest civic project ever to be undertaken on a private philanthropic basis."⁹

Other individuals involved were even more articulate about the center's intended democratic goals. When asked about its buildings, Executive Director of Construction, William F. Powers stated, "The net results will not be measured in terms of buildings and halls, steel and concrete, or pipe and wire, but rather in the influence on the cultural, recreational and mental aspects of life in New York for residents and visitors from every corner of the globe."¹⁰ True to its original founders' aspirations, the current Lincoln Center organization prides itself on "advancing a vision of making the arts accessible to all."¹¹

Intent versus Reality

Yet, the design of Lincoln Center's campus belied aspects of its proponents' mission. Despite the stated aspirations of its founders and supporters to create a complex that would serve "the many" and not just the "privileged few," its undemocratic design contradicted this goal. Between October 1956 and May 1959, Wallace K. Harrison's advisory team, and later, the individual buildings' architects, worked on a master plan that would satisfy the demands of the committed Lincoln Center constituents as well as those of Robert Moses. On the one hand, its designers were constrained by Moses' mandate that a park be placed in the area's southwest quadrant. On the other hand, they were liberated by the later addition of a parcel of land, located between West 65th and West 66th Streets, fronting Broadway, which they subsequently allocated for the Juilliard School. At the end of nearly three years of planning, the final design incorporated Sven Markelius' recommendation that the ballet theater and symphony hall flank the opera house; Marcel Breuer's recommendation that the central part of the campus align itself on an east-west axis; Pietro Belluschi's recommendation of travertine as the principal cladding material; and Harrison, Abramovitz and Johnson's agreement to incorporate glass in some way in all of the buildings.¹²

Given the spatial limitations of placing an opera house, a symphony hall, a dance theater, a library, a repertory theater, a performing arts conservatory and a park—along with a parking facility and administrative offices—all on one four-block nexus, it is perhaps understandable how the designers could not have devised a

solution in which the center would relate to all of the neighborhoods that surrounded it. Once the locations of the Metropolitan Opera House, the New York State Theater and Philharmonic Hall had been determined, Harrison's design team had to resolve the problem of the remaining buildings. Having already decided upon a dominant east-west orientation dictated by the Metropolitan Opera House facing Columbus Avenue and Broadway to the east, the design team similarly oriented the Guggenheim Bandshell, the Library for the Performing Arts and the Vivian Beaumont Theater alongside of it in order to maximize the campus' public areas.

However, the aggregation of these structures bordering the western perimeter was also to the detriment of the neighborhood behind it. In his 1981 assessment, architectural critic, Robert Bloom, maintained:

The Amsterdam Avenue side, lined by the backs of the bandshell, the opera house and the library-museum, closes itself off against a public housing project and a new high school. The southern boundary with Fordham University is a thoroughfare not an entrance...These uneasy relationships are at least partially explained by the fact that the center was built into an unfriendly environment. It was designed as an introverted fortress...¹³

Compounding this isolation, the West 65th Street overpass, known as Paul Milstein Plaza, linking the North Plaza to the Juilliard School, and the fortress-like presence created by the ground-level walls of the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the school, not only compromised the visual connection between the east and west Lincoln Square neighborhoods, but also discouraged any type of pedestrian interaction at street level and into the center itself.

These designs reflected an overall plan that seemed more evocative of Le Corbusier's utopian city with its focus on separation and isolation, than traditional Beaux-Arts civic planning ideals, in spite of compelling analysis to the contrary. In his book entitled *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, author-editor Michael Sorkin referred to the urbanism promoted by Le Corbusier as "the icon of alienation, dislodged from its original status as challenge to the insalubrious dreariness of the industrial city and reincarnated as faceless urban renewal and bland 1960s downtowns."¹⁴ Consistent with Le Corbusier's theory that "cross-roads are an enemy to traffic," the Lincoln Center organization obtained permission from the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate to eliminate West 63rd and West 64th streets between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues, in order to create a superblock.¹⁵ When asked about their rationale, a representative of the organization responded that "only in such physical and spiritual insulation can the patron, participant and pupil work together for the development of all the performing arts."¹⁶

Furthermore, Harrison's design team approved Markelius' idea—already employed at the United Nations Headquarters—to place the entire campus on a five-meter-high plinth along the Columbus Avenue border, in order to literally elevate the role of the arts in the cultural life of the city and the nation, and accommodate an underground parking network.¹⁷ Intent on attracting suburbanites as well as urbanites to its performing arts facilities, Harrison and his partner, Max Abramovitz, created a 254,530-square-foot, parking garage for 600 cars underneath the complex's park and plaza areas. Commenting on this design, Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, "The

underground parking that repeats the tangle above ground is neither the corrective nor the supporting circulation design that should have been part of the original scheme.”¹⁸

Another approved component of the urban renewal plan concerned the widening of West 62nd and West 65th Streets from four to five lanes to accommodate the increased traffic that was to inundate the area before and after performances. Three years before the center’s completion, Huxtable observed, “In further terms of urban planning, Lincoln Center has been created on a traffic island of converging avenues and the situation worsens constantly as new buildings open.”¹⁹ Theater critic, Clive Barnes, added, “This great bag of buildings makes transport and parking difficult, puts heavy demands on the area’s restaurants and bars, and runs the danger of becoming a separate precinct apart from the normal life of the city.”²⁰ Given the enormity of these problems, it is not surprising that architectural critic, Herbert Muschamp, declared that “The pivotal issue confronting the architects [of the redevelopment] is the relationship between Lincoln Center and the city around it.”²¹

Proposing Remedies

Yet, how can this relationship between the center and the surrounding community be mended when physical aspects that are central to the complex’s historic significance contradict good urban design? On the one hand, its eastward-oriented campus—with its planned yet unrealized mall to Central Park—embodied its designers’ and founders’ aspirations to make New York “the world’s most influential cultural oasis” through City Beautiful principles of procession and monumental

proportion.²² Reminiscent of the Place de L'Opéra in Paris with its grand trajectory terminating at Garnier's opera house, Lincoln Center was clearly intended to be a modern version of this Beaux-Arts ideal.

However, its grand civic design has also failed to honor its founders' original intent to "serve the many." As previously noted, instead of engaging the less affluent community to the west, it has shut it out, physically isolating the neighborhood from its performing arts campus with streetwalls that are virtually impenetrable, and thruways that encourage vehicular activity over pedestrian use. Responding to the shortcomings of Lincoln Center's design and other cultural complexes, Jane Jacobs allowed that it was still possible to "employ ground replanning tactics to weave them back into the city fabric."²³ Thus, any redevelopment effort should attempt to connect to the community through good urban planning principles that also respect the aspirations inherent in the original design.

Some of the means by which Lincoln Center's existing design could be improved are through the employment of contemporary urban planning techniques. In their presentation entitled "Urban Space Design and Social Life," Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard and Henry L. Lennard maintained:

The street level is the most critical element of the façade, and deserves special handling, since it is here that the greatest degree of interaction between inside and outside should be possible...There should not be blank walls to the street..."²⁴

Expanding on Jane Jacobs' recommendations for a vital street life involving mixed uses, the Lennards suggested the addition of such physical elements as "windows, window displays, doorways, alcoves, and outdoor cafes."²⁵

The current proposal by Lincoln Center Constituent Development Project, Inc. employs a variety of remedies in an effort to make the center more connected to its adjacent areas. Intent on transforming West 65th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, into a "living, breathing thoroughfare," the organization has proposed to narrow the street from five lanes to four; replace the travertine-and-granite pedestrian overpass with a semi-transparent footbridge, employ two monumental staircases leading up from the south side of West 65th Street to the North Plaza; attach glass-enclosed rehearsal halls to Avery Fisher Hall and the Vivian Beaumont Theater; build the Alice Tully Hall lobby out to install a performing arts bookstore; install several marquis on the street-level entrances of the Juilliard School; and plant trees along both sides of the street.²⁶

For the most part, these changes not only reflect a determination on the part of the organization to make the street more inviting to the surrounding community, but also to make the center itself more accessible to the general public. Contrasted with the area's current lack of character-defining features, the redevelopment plan reveals a potential for a broader preservation criterion that encourages good urbanistic design. Currently, several prominent vistas of Lincoln Center's buildings are marred by the presence of Paul Milstein Plaza. Although part of the original design, this overpass has created a physical and visual barrier to the center, blocking views to Avery Fisher Hall from the west, the Vivian Beaumont Theater from the east and the

Juilliard School from the south. Replacing the existing stairway and overpass with a pair of monumental stairways and a semi-transparent footbridge would not only improve the overall sightlines of the complex; it would also enhance the processional quality of the center, presently limited to the Broadway-Columbus Avenue side. Programmatically, the staircases would complement the North Plaza as an additional lounging area for both the public and the general student body in the area.

Lobby-Bookstore Addition / Theater Marquis

The other proposal for the school concerns an outward expansion of the lobby at Alice Tully Hall at the northwest corner of Broadway, Columbus and West 65th Street, to house a performing arts bookstore. Currently situated on the plaza level within the Juilliard School above, the relocated store could capitalize on one of the most heavily-trafficked areas of the city, enabling it to compete with the larger retailers nearby. Ironically, Jane Jacobs had bemoaned the fact that a cultural center was incapable of supporting a good bookstore; this notion has obviously been severely undermined, as evidenced by the flourishing retailers in the area.²⁷

Moreover, a street-level bookstore had been realized in Belluschi, Catalano and Westermann's original design for the Juilliard School, but was later relocated to the Milstein Plaza level in the years following its completion.²⁸ Although Lincoln Center's redevelopment proposal is in a conceptual phase and does not yet specify designs for this or other additions, it does offer recommendations as to the possible forms and materials these additions could take. Regarding the proposed Alice Tully Hall lobby addition-bookstore for the Juilliard School at the West 65th Street-Broadway

corner, the concept is to have a bulbous, glass build-out extending from the current lobby entrance.²⁹ In encouraging interaction with the pedestrian traffic on this block, the Juilliard School would be offering unprecedented accessibility into its facility, thereby fulfilling original goals envisioned by Lincoln Center's founders. Furthermore, it would give vitality to an underused space which is currently restricted to concert hall patrons at specific performance times.

As to the lobby expansion's visual impact on the Juilliard School, the design would have to be contextual in materials, scale and massing so that it would be consistent with the architects' brutalist design. With so few outstanding examples of brutalist architecture in the city—Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum, among them—the visual integrity of the school should be preserved. Adding a bulbous, glass appendage to the original would dramatically compromise its architectural integrity and thus, be inappropriate. However, a more contextual scheme—perhaps a glass inversion of Belluschi et al.'s design in the form of a ziggurat—would be innovative without being overpowering. Regardless, this proposal, consistent with the founders' goals of accessibility, offers an opportunity to not only encourage pedestrian use and activity, but also to capitalize on it.

Studies conducted by the redevelopment organization have also shown that many visitors to the center are confused as to the location of its theaters, making the addition of some type of signage conducive to the center's mission of enhanced accessibility. In its recent planning study of the center, planner-architects, Cooper Robertson, noted: "Buildings are very difficult to identify; Poor signs directing and welcoming visitors from surrounding neighborhoods; Few marquees at all

entrances.”³⁰ Currently, the street level of the Juilliard School has been sorely ignored and underutilized, and could use some additional elements such as theatrical signage to enliven it. Designed in an appropriate fashion that would reference the school’s brutalist design, these marquis could be instrumental in fixing a long-standing problem concerning the identification of the Juilliard School auditoriums. Similarly, other contextual signage in and around the center could provide a substantial means of helping visitors orient themselves to the complex.³¹

Semi-Transparent Rehearsal Halls

The addition of glass-enclosed rehearsal halls, as manifested in extensions to Avery Fisher Hall and the Vivian Beaumont Theater, are equally controversial from a preservation perspective, yet also justifiable from a programmatic perspective. Citing the need for additional rehearsal space in these and other buildings, the Lincoln Center organization has proposed an unusual means of meeting this particular type of program.³² Described as “a delightful conceit that seems inspired partly by Javanese shadow puppets and partly by the MTV studio overlooking Times Square,” these structural protrusions embody a response to society’s current fixation with reality-based, behind-the-scenes entertainment, most predominantly seen in the MTV and morning television studios of Midtown Manhattan.³³ Commodifying the process of making entertainment as well as the entertainment itself, the Lincoln Center Constituent Development Project has promoted the concept of translucent walls that would give “passersby dreamlike, abstract glimpses of work in progress.”³⁴

Although a novel concept for a performing arts center, the introduction of these glass-enclosed spaces are not rooted in the founders' or designers' original intent. As previously noted, much of the design of Lincoln Center is based on ideals of the City Beautiful Movement, in which the sequence and procession into the auditorium builds and culminates in the performance itself. The introduction of these translucent spaces could in fact interrupt these intentions by trivializing the end product. On the other hand, one could also interpret the rehearsals transpiring within these proposed spaces as previews to the production inside. If, in fact, they are as poetically executed as they are described, they could be powerful magnets to the forlorn West 65th Street and generate interest in the performances housed within. Furthermore, with their abstracted movements seen from the outside, these additions would revitalize neglected areas of the campus in uniquely fanciful ways.

Confronted with these two divergent interpretations, the question then remains as to what sort of visual impact these particular types of additions would have on their respective buildings. Avery Fisher Hall's prominent location at the southeast corner of Columbus Avenue, Broadway and West 65th Street, gives it a visual and physical presence on the Upper West Side and within the Lincoln Center complex that distinguishes it from the other buildings. Designed to be seen from all four of its facades, its architect, Max Abramovitz, chose a modern interpretation of a Greek peristyle with tapered, travertine-clad columns fronting a glass curtain wall. Distinguishing the hall's primary façade with an arcade, Abramovitz's design was cohesive with the arcades that were employed at the New York State Theater and the Metropolitan Opera House later on.

Upon its completion in 1962, *New York Times* journalist, Ross Parmenter, called the exterior of the concert hall “striking,” describing it as a “modern Parthenon,” whose “visible outer shell” was “spacious and airy.”³⁵ Also, as previously noted, Ada Louise Huxtable had also complimented Abramovitz on his effective use of transparency—a motif which the architect incorporated on all four facades. Unlike its Lincoln Plaza counterparts, Abramovitz’s design, with its formalistic references to classical temple models, was clearly meant to stand unencumbered. Consequently, based on documentation attesting to these character-defining features, an addition of this type would compromise the purity of its classically-inspired form, and would therefore be inappropriate.

In contrast to Avery Fisher Hall, the vista of the primary façade of the Vivian Beaumont Theater is its most compelling one. Designed in an International Style reminiscent of Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion (1963), Eero Saarinen’s 1965 theater was widely praised upon completion. *Harper’s Magazine* critic, Robert Kotlowitz, called the Beaumont, “an architectural winner,” describing it as “serene, cool, symmetrical, clean, elegant, and easily one of the most beautiful structures in New York City.”³⁶ Advocating a new aesthetic inherent in 20th-century building technology, Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, “The only place one senses the possibilities is standing in front of the Vivian Beaumont Theater, a design of strong, structural good looks.”³⁷

Although any extension to its concrete-travertine-glass façade would be inappropriate at the plaza level, this type of addition would not necessarily be unsympathetic to the theater’s appearance at street level. In fact, given the

considerable distance between the façade of the Beaumont on the North Plaza and the West 65th Street wall below it, an addition of this type might be perceived as something that defers to the theater, and therefore viable, in terms of not compromising its visual integrity. Under these conditions, this type of addition could be an innovative means of initiating pedestrian activity, stimulating interest in the center's performances and fulfilling the Beaumont's programmatic goals.

Greener Streetscapes

One of the more comprehensive proposals of the Lincoln Center redevelopment organization concerns the greening of pedestrian walkways bordering the campus. While landscaping was consistently present in Harrison's renderings of the center, it was not called out in the street-level areas of the final plan. Perhaps owing to the founders and designers' heavily-focused and economic concentration on the center itself rather than on the surrounding neighborhood, these peripheral areas have been sorely neglected. As a result, the planting of trees would be an effective tool for engaging the surrounding area, and one that would help "weave [Lincoln Center] back into the city fabric." Moreover, when contrasted with the blank, non-descript travertine walls which pervade the secondary facades of such structures as the New York State Theater, the Guggenheim Bandshell, the Metropolitan Opera House, the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Juilliard School, these plantings would ultimately enhance these specific areas as well as the center's overall aesthetic.

Accessibility Into the Complex

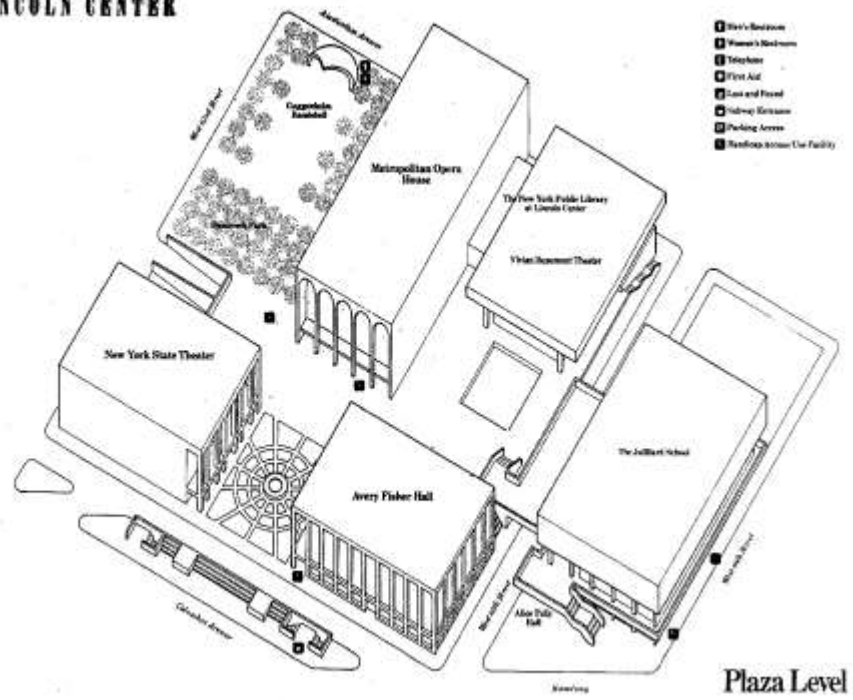
Another proposal to encourage pedestrian activity involves the elimination of the service road which currently runs along the Columbus Avenue side of the center. Instead, as detailed by *The New York Times*, “the grand approach to the main plaza will be made grander by dropping the service lane to street level, so that visitors may step dogelike into the majesty of the plaza without having to dodge taxis.”³⁸ This would vastly improve the current disjunction that exists between the monumental stairway and Lincoln Center Plaza, thereby strengthening the processional element of the original designers’ plan. On the Amsterdam Avenue side of the complex, Lincoln Center Constituent Development Project, Inc. has recommended two new approaches from the avenue into Damrosch Park, one at the southwest corner and another, a little further north. Like the proposed stairway on the south side of West 65th Street, the two entrances proposed for Damrosch Park would be highly beneficial in mitigating the center’s exclusionary elements.

Unfortunately, the remedies proposed for the Amsterdam Avenue side do not go far enough in correcting the alienating aspects of its design. Regarding the redevelopment proposal, planners Evan and Freda Eisenberg commented, “Though its westward thrust is laudable, it doesn’t thrust hard enough. The western wall of the acropolis remains blank and uninviting.”³⁹ Offering their own panacea, the Eisenbergs suggested a two-tiered café attached to the Juilliard School which would “offer a convenient mingling place for students and their future public, and make the pueblo cliff-face entrances to Juilliard and the Walter Reade Theater less forbidding.”⁴⁰

However, Paul Goldberger maintained that the problems concerning the western wall of the center “can be unforgivable and still not particularly fixable.”⁴¹

Although the center’s redevelopment proposal may not cure all of the urbanistic failings of its original plan, it does offer serious improvements. Jane Jacobs cautioned, “Impersonal city streets make anonymous people, and this is not a matter of esthetic quality nor of a mystical emotional effect in architectural scale. It is a matter of what kinds of tangible enterprises sidewalks have, and therefore of how people use the sidewalks in practical, everyday life.”⁴² By introducing tangible enterprises such as entrances, trees and additions that are invigorating and appropriate to their main buildings, the postwar performing arts center can be reborn as a facility that truly makes the arts accessible to all.

LINCOLN CENTER



37. Lincoln Center, axonometric drawing.



38. Lincoln Center, Amsterdam Avenue, view north.



39. Amsterdam Avenue, view south.



40. West 65th Street, view west.



41. Proposed West 65th Street, view west.



42. Juilliard School. West 65th Street and Broadway, southeast corner.



43. Juilliard School, entrance to Alice Tully Hall. West 65th Street and Broadway, southeast corner.



44. Avery Fisher Hall, view northwest from Columbus Avenue, with grand staircase and service road in foreground.



45. New York State Theater, view northwest from service road at Columbus Avenue.



46. Proposed Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Jane Jacobs, "Downtown Is For People," in the Editors of *Fortune*, *The Exploding Metropolis*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958) p.140.
- ² *ibid.*, p.141.
- ³ Jane Jacobs, "The need for mixed primary uses," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1961, reprint, 1992) p.169.
- ⁴ Roberta Brandes Gratz, "Lincoln Center at 20: Bringing Down the House," *Metropolis*, October 1982, v.2, p.14.
- ⁵ "Lincoln Square Project Up for Action Today," *Herald Tribune*, May 28, 1956, p.9.
- ⁶ Justice William O. Douglas, as quoted in Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) pp.491-492. The 1954 Supreme Court case, entitled *Berman vs. Parker*, prevented a store owner from reclaiming his land from a local land development agency on the grounds that the agency's new development would beautify and sanitize the derelict area.
- ⁷ Quoted in "The Idea: 'A Creative, Dynamic Force,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, September 23, 1962, VI, p.2, p.38.
- ⁸ Quoted in north wall inscription, Lincoln Center North Plaza.
- ⁹ Quoted in "Center Is Viewed As Arts Capital," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1956, p.31.
- ¹⁰ Quoted in Harold C. Schonberg, "The Lincoln Center Vision Takes Form," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 11, 1960, VI, p.101.
- ¹¹ Lincoln Center, Inc., *Lincoln Center 2000-2001 Annual Report* at www.lc.org.
- ¹² Victoria Newhouse, "Lincoln Center," in Wallace K. Harrison, Architect, (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) p.190. Sven Markelius' site configuration for the trio of buildings at Lincoln Center Plaza was reminiscent of Göteplatsen, a cultural center located in Göteborg, Sweden, constructed between the late 1920s and the mid 1930s. Comprised of a temple-fronted art museum, flanked by a theater on one side and a symphony hall on the other, Göteplatsen is a modern antecedent to Lincoln Center. Although he did not design Göteplatsen's site plan, Markelius did design the symphony hall known as Concerthuset.
- ¹³ Martin Bloom, AIA, "Cultural Colossi: Lincoln Center at 19," *AIA Journal*, August 1981, p.35.
- ¹⁴ Michael Sorkin, "See You in Disneyland," in Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) p.212.
- ¹⁵ Le Corbusier, as quoted in Jacobs, "Introduction," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.23.
- ¹⁶ Arthur Gelb, "A Deeper Significance: Full Impact of Lincoln Center Will Not Be Felt Until All Components Open," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1962, p.35.
- ¹⁷ Bloom, "Cultural Colossi: Lincoln Center at 19," p.35.
- ¹⁸ Ada Louise Huxtable, "Adding Up the Score," *The New York Times*, September 25, 1966, II, p.29.
- ¹⁹ *ibid.*
- ²⁰ Clive Barnes, "Lincoln Center: Bravos and Barbs for America's Number One Cultural Supermarket," *The New York Times*, September 1968, p.44.
- ²¹ Herbert Muschamp, "Lincoln Center's Next Big Production: Itself," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2001, II, p.47.
- ²² Arthur Gelb, "A Deeper Significance: Full Impact of Lincoln Center Will Not Be Felt Until All Components Open," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1962, p.35.
- ²³ Jacobs, "Salvaging Projects," in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.402.
- ²⁴ Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard and Henry L. Lennard, "Urban Space Design and Social Life," *International Making Cities Livable Conferences*, (Carmel, California: IMCL Council, 1999) p.6.
- ²⁵ *ibid.*
- ²⁶ Evan and Freda Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2001, II, p.28.

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- ²⁷ Jacobs, "Introduction," *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.4. In addition to a Barnes & Noble and Tower Books located directly across the street from the Juilliard School, there is also an opera bookstore located south on Broadway.
- ²⁸ Mildred F. Schmertz, "The Juilliard School," *Architectural Record*, January 1970, v.147, p.122.
- ²⁹ Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," p.28.
- ³⁰ Excerpt from *Cooper Robertson Planning Survey*, fax from C. Adair Smith, Project Associate, Lincoln Center Constituent Development Project, Inc., March 22, 2002.
- ³¹ For instance, the Guggenheim Museum at Fifth Avenue features four-foot-high, movable metal signposts that have the museum's name punched out in a font that matches the letters on the building.
- ³² Beyer Blinder Belle, "Avery Fisher Hall" and "Vivian Beaumont Theater and Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater," *Lincoln Center Capital Needs Survey: Executive Summary (Draft)*, December 6, 1999.
- ³³ Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," p.28.
- ³⁴ *ibid.*, p.28.
- ³⁵ Ross Parmenter, "Lincoln Center Assumes Role in City Cultural Life," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1962, p.34.
- ³⁶ Robert Kotlowitz, "If You Must Build A Cultural Center," *Harper's Magazine*, July 1967, v.235, p.98.
- ³⁷ Huxtable, "Adding Up the Score," p.29.
- ³⁸ Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," p.28.
- ³⁹ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Interview with Paul Goldberger, January 9, 2002.
- ⁴² Jacobs, "The Use of Sidewalks: Contact," in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.57.

C. Public Space

The redevelopment organization's proposals to revamp the plazas and park at Lincoln Center signify an attempt to make these areas as meaningful to the public during the day, as they are at performance time. Like other aspects of the center, the public areas have had their advocates and opponents among many individuals and groups, including the Lincoln Center constituents, the center's critics, its patrons and the local community. Although some individuals believe that these spaces function adequately as they are, others believe that physical changes could be implemented so that they "perform on the same level as the artists who tread [Lincoln Center's] stages."¹

More than six of Lincoln Center's sixteen acres are dedicated to public use and, under the terms set forth in its 1957 urban renewal agreement, as approved by the Board of Estimate, are owned by the city.² Yet, in spite of occupying at least 37% of the entire campus, only 15% of the organization's current 1.2 billion dollar redevelopment budget is to be used for their improvement.³ Of this total, 120 million dollars has been pledged by the city, whose allocation to the center comes from local and state funding sources.⁴ Comprised of Lincoln Center Plaza, now known as Josie Robertson Plaza; Lincoln Center Plaza North; Lincoln Center Plaza South and Damrosch Park; these spaces not only possess individual distinction on their own, but also represent the fulfillment of a modernist master plan in urban landscape design.

Like its buildings, Lincoln Center's plazas and park were devised by some of the leading American designers of the postwar era. Although Robert Moses had

delegated the configuration of these areas to Wallace K. Harrison and Max Abramovitz, the final site plan was a collaborative effort that involved Harrison's advisory team and the Lincoln Center architects. Once the Lincoln Center board had approved the plan, Philip Johnson produced the design for Lincoln Center Plaza; Dan Kiley designed Lincoln Center Plaza North and collaborated with Richard Webel of Darling, Innocenti & Webel on Lincoln Center Plaza South and the landscaping of Damrosch Park; and the firm of Eggers & Higgins designed the Guggenheim Bandshell and its audience area.

Reflecting a modernist aesthetic in their landscape design, the Lincoln Center architects used principles of abstraction, uniformity and minimalism in their employment of geometric forms and patterns. In her article entitled "Cherishing Landscapes As Living Art," reporter Anne Raver wrote, "The landscapes created after World War II were not only abstract and minimalist in their design, but also reflected an optimism about solving the world's problems."⁵ Landscape architect Peter Walker, added, "We had the idea that there was some connection between modern art and design and social uplift, that you could transform a society."⁶ Owing to the popularity of this vision—in part, inspired by Mies van der Rohe's iconic Seagram Building (1958) with its slightly elevated plaza—the City of New York amended its zoning law in 1961 to encourage the development of these types of public spaces in exchange for allowing developers to add square footage to their commercial buildings.

The New York Urban Plaza Phenomenon

Between 1961 and 1974, New York City developers created a total of 136 plazas, making them the prevailing type of privately-owned, public space that was constructed during this period.⁷ However, many of these spaces were eventually perceived as “desolate, depressing, cold, and aesthetically hostile environments,” leading city officials to realize that “light and air, while important, can sometimes be too much of a good thing.”⁸ Reflecting changing attitudes toward the plaza, in 1996, the New York City Planning Commission started prohibiting “as-of-right” plaza construction, and instead required additional approval. Since then, the Commission under the Guiliani administration has proposed eliminating the plaza bonus altogether in an effort to foster buildings that honor the streetwall rather than divorce themselves from it.⁹

Although Lincoln Center’s plazas and park share many of the physical qualities of the urban plazas which were constructed by commercial developers during this period in New York, they were nonetheless fundamentally different in intent. Whereas, the urban plazas were an amenity that were provided in exchange for an incentive to build, Lincoln Center’s publicly-owned plazas and park were meant to enhance the cultural experience of the place itself. Kiley himself described the Lincoln Center project as “a civic plaza” in which each building was commissioned by “a different prominent architect of the day” and “reflect[ed] the independent vision of its maker.”¹⁰ These civic-minded aspirations for excellence at Lincoln Center, coupled with the

aforementioned adherence to principles espoused in the City Beautiful movement, confirm a design of public space meant in fact to “social[ly] uplift,” if not transform.¹¹

Josie Robertson Plaza

Philip Johnson’s design for Josie Robertson Plaza, like his concept for the New York State Theater, was primarily about theatricality and procession. Clearly modeled after the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome within its own triad of buildings, Johnson’s neo-Renaissance meeting place was defined by a concentric and radiating design of travertine paving set within a dark stone aggregate. At the center of this scheme, the architect designed an elegant, polished Canadian black granite fountain, capable of shooting water thirty-two feet in the air, facilitated in part by a total of 577 programmable jets.¹² When asked about the fountain, Johnson responded, “We conceived it as a lighted, glowing, moving feature for the plaza and gave it the focal point a fireplace gives a home.”¹³

Like his aspirations for the New York State Theater, in which Johnson intended the audience to “form the psychological walls of the room,” the main Plaza was also meant to be animated by people.¹⁴ In addition to the numerous critics who praised the plaza for its vitality at performance time, architectural critic, Herbert Muschamp, called it “a great urban stage” in which “the main plaza and the three buildings facing onto it add up to one great theater, a monumental showcase of urban spectacle.”¹⁵ Muschamp also made the apt comparison to the Piazza del Campidoglio, since in addition to the plaza’s physical likeness, it also possessed other qualities evocative of Michelangelo’s masterpiece. In his analysis of the Campidoglio, author-scholar, Cliff

Moughtin, called it the “fullest expression” of “the piazza as a place of arrival and departure.”¹⁶ Like its Italian counterpart, Josie Robertson Plaza has always been—foremost—a place of arrival and departure, owing to its role as a processional conduit, enabling the flow of center’s patrons to get to and from their performance destinations.

Furthermore, as a public space that uplifts its visitors, Josie Robertson Plaza has succeeded brilliantly. AIA critic, Martin Bloom waxed:

The main plaza with its central fountain and concentrically radiating pavements can be pleasant at performance time, when it is animated with people moving toward and through the various entrances to the theaters and by those observing it all either from the rim of the fountain or from café tables along the sides. The glass-enclosed lobbies and promenades behind the columns that punctuate all of the plaza elevations contribute brightness and a sense of festivity to the space. Under the right conditions, the effect of all this can be disarming.¹⁷

Similarly, Paul Goldberger called Lincoln Center Plaza “one of New York’s few true urban squares, and a further answer to those who would say that Lincoln Center has no redeeming value urbanistically.”¹⁸ *New York Times* journalist, Richard F. Shepard, concurred, writing, “The plaza and the buildings by themselves convey an atmosphere of elegant official culture, but fill them with people and they assume a bright air of anticipation of a gala that is about to begin and envelop everyone in something special. There is a sense of going out and, if you are there, you become part of it.”¹⁹

However, the transitory quality of the main plaza is perhaps its most misunderstood one as the Lincoln Center organization attempts to refashion it into a more consistently populated destination. Recently appointed president, Reynold Levy,

said, "One of the goals of the plan is to redesign the central plaza and surrounding buildings to make them less imposing. To the degree that the redevelopment plan will have people lingering a bit, I think that's a big plus for audience diversity."²⁰ While it is unclear how Levy equated a lingering public with a diverse one, it is clear that making the center "less imposing" belies the intent of both its founders and original designers, whose plan was originally characterized by *The New York Times* as being "monumental modern."²¹

Given its status as the nation's largest and most accomplished facilitator for the performing arts, Lincoln Center's imposing design in this respect clearly embodies its function. In addition to the estimated 10,000 workers and students who populate its campus on a daily basis, the center also boasts approximately 4.7 million visitors a year who attend its performances, thereby generating more than 1 billion dollars in revenue for the city's economy.²² Summing up Lincoln Center, Cliver Barnes wrote:

Just to see these buildings...is to become aware of the dream of Lincoln Center and, fundamentally, of its fulfillment. They are a living embodiment of the all-American concept of the biggest and the best; they have a grandiosity of imagination and they overachieve magnificently. The dream of Lincoln Center was to provide a new Establishment of the performing arts and to become a wonder of the world. The Establishment has been established, and flatteringly the world gasps, with a piquant mixture of awe, envy and amusement.²³

Barnes' assessment not only highlights the aspirations and achievements of its founders and designers in creating something so quintessentially American, but also the ironic aspects of the complex as it has come to be experienced by succeeding generations. Thus, while "awe" and "envy" may typically characterize people's

responses to imposing architecture, “amusement” does not—suggesting that its architecture has become humanized over time.

Another criticism of Josie Robertson Plaza stresses the lack of use by the people who work there. Rebecca Robertson, President of Lincoln Center Development Project, Inc., said, “At, night, you have an atmosphere of luminosity which is what the designers wanted. But during the day, 8,000 people use that space. You never see them. The synergy that should exist between the constituents doesn’t occur.”²⁴ Her redevelopment organization’s proposals for additional eateries throughout the complex would undoubtedly encourage more visible activity from these employees at certain times of the day. William Whyte, a pre-eminent authority on public space in New York, noted, “Some 80 percent of the people activity on plazas comes during the lunchtime,” thereby affirming the potential success of Robertson’s plan.²⁵ However, Whyte also added, “But this is par, and cities should not feel their downtown spaces are uniquely inefficient in this respect. Legitimate theatres operate only a few hours a day but are not the less functional for that.”²⁶ Whyte’s analysis reveals a very important distinction concerning the use of public plazas, and the realistic expectations their stewards should have pertaining to their ongoing use.

Admittedly, Lincoln Center Plaza and its neighboring public spaces are not without their faults. Even Martin Bloom, who gave a glowing endorsement of the main plaza, was highly critical of the connections between the center’s public spaces:

Like a three-dimensional checkerboard, every other square is raised. And, in a checkerboard esthetic, elements do not so much relate as abut...In spite of real variations in dimensions, each volume and void of Lincoln Center is

perceived as a cube, that particularly static, even claustrophobic, form. And, because the open spaces seem to be approximately the same size and shape as the enclosed ones, space does not flow here. It sits—in giant chunks. So it is quite possible for a visitor to come to the main plaza and remain unaware of the gardens on either side of the opera house. Their entrances do not invite one into the spaces; one finds them by chance.²⁷

Thus, in an effort to visually and physically connect the plaza and park areas, as well as make them more intimate in character, Lincoln Center, Inc. commissioned the internationally-renowned architect, Frank Gehry, to devise a solution.

Transparent Coverings

Responding to the challenge, Gehry proposed a glass dome over Lincoln Center Plaza as well as a glass-enclosed galleria over the north-south axis, running between the western façades of the New York State Theater and Avery Fisher Hall. Clearly, Gehry's proposal would have substantially altered the look and feel of Lincoln Center in ways that were not consistent with its original intent. Moreover, his design would have compromised the integrity of the center, transforming it into, what some critics called, a "suburban mall."²⁸ In her essay entitled "Cities for Sale," M. Christine Boyer, cited the motives behind such proposed makeovers:

In this competitive location game, cities and regions must market themselves: their 'imageability' becomes the new selling point. Consequently spatial design codes and architectural pattern languages become increasingly important in selling the look of an upmarket, upbeat environment. In this marketing war, style-of-life and 'livability,' visualized and represented in spaces of conspicuous consumption, become important assets that cities proudly display.²⁹

In spite of his grandiose scheme, Frank Gehry's design solution—as commissioned by his client—was to ultimately blur a set of separate yet distinctive civic spaces into an “upmarket, upbeat environment.” And, despite the fact that Lincoln Center Chairwoman, Beverly Sills, and Metropolitan Opera House General Manager, Joseph Volpe, both opposed the proposal on the basis of its inappropriateness, it was its potential maintenance issues which caused the Lincoln Center board to reject it.³⁰

Transparent Additions

In addition to his unifying concept for the plazas at Lincoln Center, Gehry has also proposed glass-enclosed additions to the New York State Theater and Avery Fisher Hall. As noted in Chapter 4A, when Philip Johnson and Max Abramovitz were told that they would have to make reductions in their designs, the two architects decided to decrease their buildings' backstage areas. Addressing the organization's need for a centralized visitors center and additional rehearsal space at the New York State Theater, the architect has proposed two conjoined units, attached to the eastern façade of the theater, to satisfy these demands, along with an indoor café. As discussed in the previous chapter, Cooper Robertson's planning study concluded that the majority of first-time visitors to its complex are disoriented as to where its individual auditoriums are located.³¹ Citing this and other needs that include a need for a centralized list of performances and events, and information on the center itself, the redevelopment organization has proposed the inclusion of a visitor center as part of Gehry's addition to the New York State Theater.

Perhaps more than any other building, the State theater could undergo an extension to its secondary façade, without having its architectural integrity adversely compromised. In contrast to its primary façade, with its formalistic reference to Perrault's façade at the back of the Louvre in Paris, Johnson's secondary facades are noticeably non-descript, consisting of vast and recessed travertine wall panels, moderate pilasters and headlight sconces. Although much has been written in praise of Johnson's front façade, no major journal or newspaper has rendered an opinion about his secondary façades. Furthermore, as a complex that is primarily oriented toward the west, the New York State Theater, unlike Avery Fisher Hall, falls considerably short in enticing visitors from this perspective.³² The secondary façade's prominence on Columbus Avenue begs for some sort of engagement with the Upper West Side, especially since it is the last building aligned with Broadway, before the boulevard disappears behind the blocks that separate it from Columbus Avenue. Coupled with the organization's plans to plant trees in front of the extension, an appropriately-scaled addition would infuse this lifeless area with vitality and dimension.

On the other hand, the proposed addition to Avery Fisher Hall is grossly inappropriate. Like the proposed addition to the concert hall at the corner of Columbus Avenue, Broadway and West 65th Street, this eastern extension will mar the temple-like form of Abramovitz's design, which was meant to be seen and appreciated from all four of its sides. A bulbous protrusion or any other type of addition attached to its facades would undermine the monumentality of its design. Another addition is proposed for the roof of Avery Fisher Hall which could be appropriate if its size and

massing does not detract from the hall's majestic quality. This could potentially be achieved by recessing the addition far back enough from its four edges so that its visual effect at plaza level is minimal. Currently, the massing on the roof is not able to be seen from Lincoln Center Plaza and any rooftop addition to the hall should be moderate enough in size so as not to overpower it.

Innovation

Some of Gehry's redevelopment proposals for Lincoln Center Plaza are both thoughtfully conceived—and appropriate from a preservation perspective. One of the organization's primary goals has been to provide centralized classroom space, whereby visiting schoolchildren can learn about the activities housed within each performing arts facility. Currently relegated to available rehearsal rooms within the individual buildings that double as makeshift classrooms, there are no dedicated rooms for this type of use. Having these multi-functional classrooms would streamline much of the center's educational operations as well as minimize interference with its other activities.

In response to these programmatic needs, Frank Gehry has proposed the placement of two multi-purpose classrooms, and possibly, a 300-seat theater underneath Lincoln Center Plaza's forecourt. Connected by a spiral staircase within an elliptically-shaped hole located at the juncture of the plaza and its monumental stairway at Columbus Avenue, these rooms would not only be easily identifiable, but also further the center's educational mission. In addition, they would provide a connection to the IRT subway stop, located north of the area. Moreover, this concept

would minimize interference with the integrity of the main plaza by placing this much-needed facility below grade. In terms of retaining the plaza's character-defining features, this elliptically-carved space would be consistent with the original designers' geometric motives that pervade the public areas.

Similarly, Gehry has proposed another elliptically-shaped entrance directly in front of the expanded lobby area of the Metropolitan Opera House in order to improve accessibility.³³ Like the proposal for more entrances along the perimeter of the complex, this proposal would also improve accessibility to the campus through one of the most direct means possible: from the underground parking garage to the main plaza above. Citing a major obstacle in expediting visitor pick-ups and drop-offs to and from the center, the redevelopment organization has proposed a straight underground thruway, linking West 62nd and 65th Streets, so that people can come and go from the center quickly, without impacting traffic congestion. Like most of the other plans to increase accessibility, this is a plan that has been well-conceived.

Lincoln Center Plaza North

Of all the public space at Lincoln Center, its north plaza is probably its most comprehensive as a modernist work, owing to the talents of its landscape architect, its artists and its buildings' architects. Designed by renowned modern landscape architect, Daniel Urban Kiley, working in conjunction with architects, Eero Saarinen and Gordon Bunshaft, and sculptors, Henry Moore and Alexander Calder, Lincoln Center Plaza North was a successful fusion of art, architecture and landscape. Originally containing quartets of London plane Trees, enhanced by a ground covering

of alternating planters containing red and white Japanese azaleas, Kiley's twenty-foot-square travertine planters run parallel in an east-west axis along the north façade of the opera house, and single-file in a north-south axis, separated by expansive forecourt, along the west façade of Avery Fisher Hall. Together, they frame the 80-by-120-foot reflecting pool, housing Henry Moore's sublime bronze sculpture, *Reclining Figure*. By contrast, Alexander Calder's solid yet delicate steel *Le Guichet* nearby provides a whimsical portal through which patrons may enter and exit the center's library for the performing arts.

Critical response to Lincoln Center Plaza North has been overwhelmingly positive. In her 1966 assessment, Ada Louise Huxtable called the view afforded by Kiley's reflecting pool, Moore's *Reclining Figure* and Saarinen's Vivian Beaumont Theater, "the only honestly contemporary vista in the place."³⁴ Moreover, in her 1986 reassessment, Huxtable wrote:

When the pool in front of the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center has water, the Henry Moore provides that essential, fulfilling element of style and definition that raises the whole complex to urban art. Not least is the strong, evocative sensuality of the work, as opposed to geometric abstraction. There is an extra dimension of implied human reference that does much to make people relate to the space. The all-important result must usually be achieved in the modernist aesthetic by finesse of proportions and scale.³⁵

Citing Plaza North for its successful marriage of art, architecture and landscape design, Huxtable's praise has been reiterated by other distinguished critics as well.

Paul Goldberger asserted that "the reflecting pool and the Henry Moore and the façade of the Beaumont are one of the only things in Lincoln Center that has real

architectural strength instead of presumed architectural strength.”³⁶ An unnamed critic for *Time* magazine remarked that Kiley’s setting, with its “tree-dotted promenade—designed for people bound for cultural experiences...would have made Michelangelo turn green with envy.”³⁷ Furthermore, this same reviewer hailed Moore for his ability to “enliven a great geometric space with a human form in bronze—the kind of intense life in art that the voids of architecture demand.”³⁸

Under Used = Under Appreciated?

Yet, for all its success as a civic-sponsored work of art, Lincoln Center Plaza North has been sorely under-used. Citing a lack of activity, Lincoln Center, Inc. has designs to turn it into a quad-like area for the center’s students and employees, or, to quote the *Times* description, “picture Washington Square, but greener and less louche.”³⁹ Reducing the size of the reflecting pool and consigning it to another area of the plaza, the plan calls for a conversion of the existing water element into a rectangular lawn with several trees placed intermittently around it. At the plaza’s east end, aligning the western façade of Avery Fisher Hall, the proposal entails a bistro which would serve lunch and dinner. All of this, it is hoped, will improve an area considered “serene to the point of desolation.”⁴⁰

Admittedly, most of the time Lincoln Center Plaza North is nominally occupied—if at all. Yet, as William Whyte maintained, in spite of prevailing notions of success, this desolation does not necessarily signal failure. Herbert Muschamp argued that a plaza’s inactivity could be its greatest asset, making it ideal “for sorting out

inner and outer worlds.”⁴¹ Offering his own prescription for change, Muschamp declared:

Perhaps the time has come to change the criteria for measuring success. Emptiness may not be a quality to be feared. Perhaps the Japanese are not the only people with the capacity to appreciate the quality of a void. After all, there is often little difference between a failed American public space and a Zen garden. Why shouldn't we, too, learn to recognize the value of hollowness.⁴²

Given the north plaza's Zen-like qualities, with its wide expanse, still body of water and natural yet ordered elements, Muschamp's analogy is particularly fitting. Indeed, the architectural critic even concluded his analysis by urging the Lincoln Center organization to “rethink the criteria by which the success of public space is to be judged” in formulating their redevelopment goals.⁴³

A Case for Preservation

As one of the most significant modern landscapes in the City of New York, Lincoln Center Plaza North merits preservation. Designed by American master modern landscape architect, Dan Kiley, working with other internationally-renowned designers and artists, the north plaza is one of the most comprehensive public spaces to fuse art, architecture and landscape into a modernist aesthetic. Furthermore, while Kiley is well represented across the United States in his designs for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Arch park in St. Louis, the plaza for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and the landscape at Dulles International Airport, his work in New York City has been limited to Lincoln Center, the interior courtyard of the landmark Ford Foundation Building (with Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo

Associates, 1967) and a pair of projects on Roosevelt Island (1973/1975). Having been awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1997, Kiley is a distinguished master in a field that has yet to achieve universal recognition.

Thus, given the significance of Plaza North as a successful collaboration involving an acknowledged American master, it should not be tampered with. Paul Goldberger suggested that “architecturally it’s stronger as it is, at least by a hair,” yet then admitted that “It’s a tough call...because the quad [concept] is not an abomination, but merely something that I would say is slightly less appealing than what is there now, maybe the trade-off makes sense.”⁴⁴ However, when the consensus of critical opinion attests to the significance of a particular historic resource, it is within the public interest to preserve it.

A Plaza Suitable for Dual Uses

Perhaps the most promising aspect about the North Plaza is its potential to be a public area that is both meditative and active, through the installation of a bistro along the western-facing forecourt of Avery Fisher Hall. As minutes from the July 12, 1961, building committee reveal, this type of commercial venture was consistent with Harrison’s vision for the plaza areas. In the committee’s discussion pertaining to public spaces, Harrison was quoted as saying “that he felt that there should definitely be more shops and restaurants on the Plaza, which would one day become the most important area of New York.”⁴⁵ Moreover, several factors about this particular type of operation could make it an appropriate and attractive addition to the north plaza and the overall complex. Its location on the eastern perimeter would not alter nor interfere

with the acclaimed character-defining features of the vista looking west toward the Vivian Beaumont Theater. It would also fulfill the organization's redevelopment goals by bringing activity to a highly underused portion of the center through a use that could be reversible.

More importantly, it would not only bring in additional revenue to the Lincoln Center organization and the city to help generate funding for ongoing maintenance of the public areas, but would also increase public awareness concerning the work of Dan Kiley and his fellow designers. Capitalizing on one of the center's most stunning vistas, a wider appreciation of this space could inspire visitors to explore the center's other offerings—both cultural and commercial—housed throughout the various indoor and outdoor areas of its campus. Finally, by combining a picturesque cultural setting with a drinking or dining amenity, it could emulate the success of other outdoor landmark establishments around the city, such as the Iris and B. Gerald Roof Garden bar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Bryant Park Grill and Café in Bryant Park and the outdoor café at the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden. All of these establishments promote greater appreciation of some of New York's more distinctive environments without obscuring their unique sense of place.

Damrosch Park / Lincoln Center Plaza South

More than any other public space at Lincoln Center, the area comprising Damrosch Park could benefit from redevelopment. Having been relegated to the southwest quadrant of the complex by its proponent, Robert Moses, Damrosch Park has always had an uneasy relationship with the rest of the complex. The park's

pavilion and paving, consisting of the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Bandshell and its accompanying audience area, was designed by the established firm of Eggers & Higgins, who were perhaps most famous for their early works. These included Washington, D.C.'s National Gallery of Art (1939) and the Jefferson Memorial (1943); and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Hall at the American Museum of Natural History at Central Park West, between West 77th and 81st Streets, (1936; begun by John Russell Pope in 1924).

Employing an onion-shaped section in their design of the Guggenheim Bandshell, a fifty-five-foot high, seventy-five-foot wide and fifty-six-foot deep structure, the firm's design was a contemporary gloss on the late 19th-century Eastern European tower motif. Housed on the western perimeter of the park, the bandshell was constructed of slender reinforced concrete ribs, and built to accommodate seventy-five musicians.⁴⁶ In front of the bandshell, Eggers & Higgins designed a paved forecourt with alternately-colored waves of terrazzo-like aggregate, capable of accommodating up to 3,000 concert-goers. The crabapple trees that flank the bandshell and forecourt area were selected by the landscape architects working on the south plaza area.

Comprising the northwest portion of this area, Lincoln Center Plaza South had originally been designed by landscape architect, Richard Webel, of Darling, Innocenti & Webel, who had been hired by the City's Parks Department. However, after a glowing endorsement from Rockefeller and the center's design team for his work on Plaza North, Dan Kiley was brought in to oversee Webel's work in order to ensure "site continuity."⁴⁷ Separating the bandshell's audience area from Lincoln Center

Plaza South, the two designers planted 45 purple leaf maples, which they spaced at equal distances apart from one another in nine rows of five trees per row with low, black marble benches facing some of the trees. For the areas along and perpendicular to the Metropolitan Opera House, Kiley mirrored his configuration of Plaza North, employing twenty-foot-square travertine planters, housing quartets of London plane trees amidst a bed of Japanese azaleas. Forming an “L” that referenced the north plaza’s configuration, Kiley’s design featured two overlapping rows of three-by-four planters along the north-south axis, and six-by-two planters along the east-west axis.

Since its opening in 1969, Damrosch Park and Lincoln Center Plaza South have been subordinate in popularity to the other two plazas, perhaps owing to Martin Bloom’s assertion about their physical isolation from other areas of the campus. Whereas Josie Robertson Plaza has been a natural conduit for individuals arriving and leaving the center’s performance venues, and Plaza North has been a thoroughfare for patrons and students using its library, auditoriums and neighboring conservatory, Plaza South and Damrosch Park are generally dependent on the activities housed within the Guggenheim Bandshell. Martin Bloom wrote, “Although the space of the south plaza is unresolved, its ungainly bandshell has become the focus for many popular free events, day and evening.”⁴⁸ In addition to its physical isolation from its adjacent plazas within the center, Lincoln Center’s southern park area has also suffered from having to compete with nearby recreational giants, Central and Riverside parks.

In terms of a critical consensus, Damrosch Park has not been warmly received. Commentary has ranged from an “an awkward neighbor put there by the city...” to “a pretty stupid, unpleasant place [that] doesn’t work as a park.”⁴⁹ Regarding the bandshell, a critic for *Progressive Architecture* described it as “a halved onion with a point,” while Robert Kotlowitz, writing for *Harper’s Magazine*, referred to it as “ugly.”⁵⁰ While it certainly could be argued that Damrosch Park has succeeded as an outdoor concert venue, its lack of use most of the time suggests that it is a park that could withstand improvement.

On the other hand, critical commentary attesting to the mastery of Dan Kiley and his exemplary work at Lincoln Center, make Lincoln Center Plaza South a highly significant historic resource that merits preservation. Landscape architect and scholar, Ken Smith, wrote:

At Lincoln Center, Dan Kiley designed a landscape of tightly spaced bosquets that gave a sense of unity and continuity to the complex. The use of strong, simple and well-proportioned planters and plantings served to contain the spaces and to balance the relationships of the sunny plazas and courts with the shaded areas. Composed of quartets of plane trees planted in large, square travertine planters partially recessed to minimize their sale, the bosquets served as simple, elegant counterpoints to the showy but undistinguished architecture.⁵¹

Taken together with Lincoln Center Plaza North, Plaza South represents a concerted effort by the center’s founders, planners and designers to utilize Kiley’s talents to stylistically tie the campus together through his characteristic motives of abstraction, geometry and minimalism. Thus, while Kiley’s design for Plaza South should be

preserved, Eggers & Higgins' Damrosch Park could undergo changes which would make it more distinctive to its patrons.

In her discussion of public parks, Jane Jacobs observed, "We can already see that city districts with relatively large amounts of generalized park seldom develop intense community focus on a [smaller] park and intense love for it...such as the people of Greenwich Village have for Washington Square..."⁵² This statement clearly epitomizes Damrosch Park, which has had a notable absence of support from the park-going public and critics, beyond its dedicated use as an outdoor concert space. In an effort to revitalize the area, Lincoln Center's redevelopment organization has proposed softening its existing landscape with a botanical garden, consisting of exotic trees and plantings; replacing its paved audience area with a large, rectangular-shaped lawn; and introducing a water element along the east-west axis of its north perimeter. In addition to these changes, the organization is proposing an outdoor café abutting the western facade of the New York State Theater, along with a new bandshell, placed diagonally facing into the lawn area, within the plaza's southwest corner.

Perhaps more than any other proposal for the public areas at Lincoln Center, the redevelopment scheme for Damrosch Park signals an effort by its parent organization to honor its original mission regarding accessibility. Re-orienting the park's bandshell so that it faces the long-neglected Amsterdam Avenue would be a powerful means of atoning for the alienating urban renewal practices of the past. In addition, the most intriguing aspect of the plan, the botanical garden itself, would be placed at the park's westernmost end, providing both an inducement and a sound

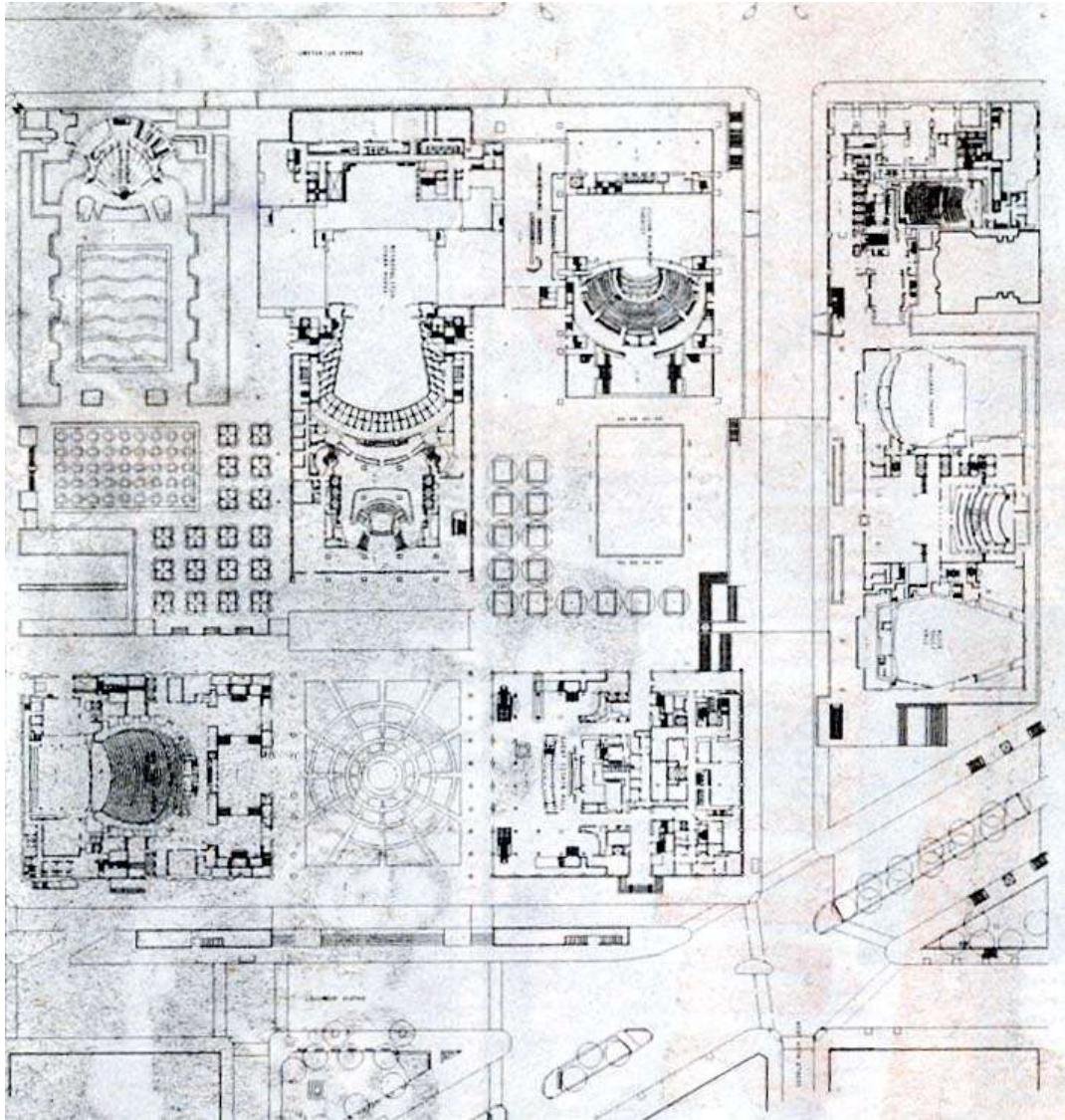
buffer for the adjacent community. The Lincoln Center organization has made a legitimate claim concerning the lack of informal open space for students of the Juilliard School. Providing an expansive lawn area would allow for a modicum of recreation and leisure, for both students of the center and the neighboring schools, and the public at large.

Reconfiguring this park into one which could be potentially used and appreciated by people of all ages beyond the scope of its outdoor concert audiences is a positive change—and one that should be endorsed by local officials for its tangible association with a public purpose. Perhaps more than any other proposal for Lincoln Center, the redevelopment of Damrosch Park embodies Paul Byard’s dictum about an “act of renewal” based on “what we think something was and about what we want it to be and to say about ourselves today.”⁵³ Lincoln Center’s reconfiguration of this public area is about transforming an isolated area into a neighborhood oasis so that people of all ages, both within the center and outside of it, can enjoy it on a regular basis.

Reconciling Preservation, Programmatic and Economic Needs

The issues confronting Lincoln Center’s park and plazas highlight the ongoing debate between public purpose and private benefit, and how stewards of the American postwar performing arts center can potentially reconcile preservation, programmatic and economic goals. As entities entrusted with the management of public space, these organizations have an obligation to preserve the use and integrity of these parks and plazas, as supported by documentation attesting to their

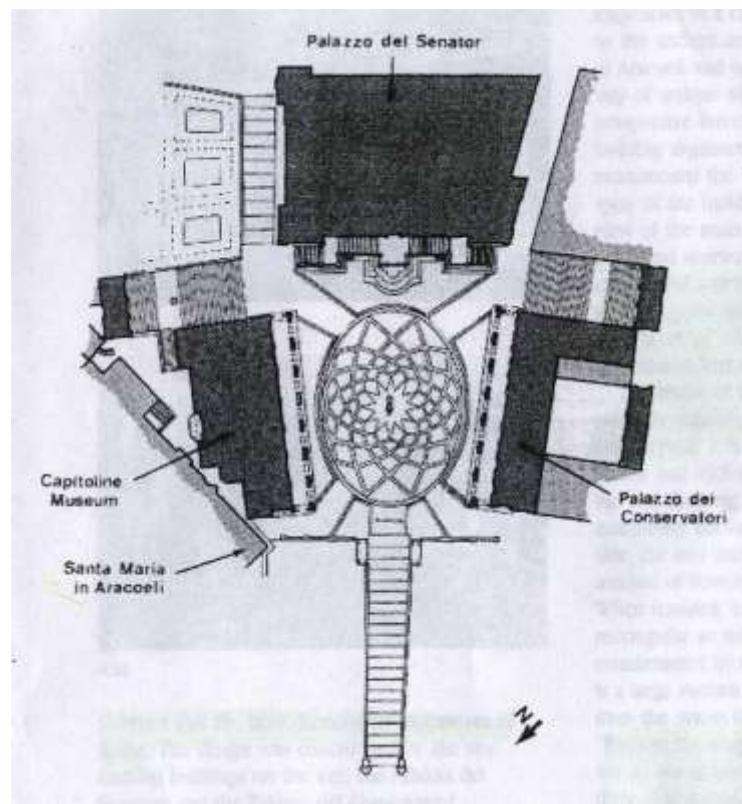
significance as historic resources and viable public spaces. By adhering to principles of utility and intent, they will continue to be thoroughfares or destinations, depending on their individual locations and programs. Each possessing separate identities and characters, imbued with modern landscape principles of abstraction and minimalism, these diverse yet cohesive ensembles of urban oases can offer respite and contemplation that other parks and plazas cannot.



47. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan detailing facilities and public area configurations.



48. Josie Robertson Plaza & Avery Fisher Hall, Intermission.



49. Piazza del Campidoglio



50. Proposed Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan.



51. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view southwest.



52. Vivian Beaumont Theater with Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure*, Lincoln Center Plaza North, view west.



53. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view of Avery Fisher Hall western forecourt area.



54. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view southeast.



55. Damrosch Park, view southwest.



ENDNOTES

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- ²⁴ Quoted in Howard Kissel, "Making a greater West Side glory," *New York Daily News*, January 12, 2001, p.33.
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- ²⁶ *ibid.*
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- ²⁹ M. Christine Boyer, "Cities for Sale," in Michael Sorkin, (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) p.193.
- ³⁰ In a humorous anecdote about the Gehry proposal, Sills recalled asking the board members, "'A glass dome?...We're going to have to heat it and air-condition it and clean the pigeon poop! Let

-
- me see a show of hands—which constituent would like to pay for that?’” According to Sills, none of them responded. Recounted in Frank Bruni, “Diva Among the Divas,” *The New York Times Magazine*, January 6, 2002, p.22.
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- ³³ Andrew Berlinger, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP Project Associate, and co-author, *Lincoln Center’s Program and Facility Assessment*, dated December 6, 1999. Interviewed, December 12, 2001,
- ³⁴ Ada Louise Huxtable, “Adding Up the Score,” *The New York Times*, September 25, 1966, II, p.29.
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- ³⁶ Interview with Paul Goldberger, January 9, 2002.
- ³⁷ “The Heroic Bather,” *Time*, September 3, 1965, v.86, p.60.
- ³⁸ *ibid.*
- ³⁹ Eisenberg, “The Public’s Stake in a Cultural Crossroads,” p.28.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Herbert Muschamp, “Public Space or Private, a Compulsion to Fill It,” *The New York Times*, August 27, 2000, II, p.29.
- ⁴² *ibid.*
- ⁴³ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Paul Goldberger, January 9, 2002.
- ⁴⁵ “Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Minutes of the Architects Panel Meeting,” July 12, 1961, John D. Rockefeller 3rd Papers, Series 1, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Files, Subseries 4: LINCOLN CENTER, Box 57, no.515 – “Minutes, 1961-1963,” Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, New York.
- ⁴⁶ William F. Farrell, “Art Agency Approves Lincoln Center Park Plan,” *The New York Times*, July 29, 1965, p.17.
- ⁴⁷ Dan Kiley, as quoted in Ken Smith, “The Challenge of Preserving Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts,” Charles A. Birnbaum, ed., *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture: Papers from the Wave Hill-National Park Service Conference*, November 1995, v.10, (Cambridge, MA: Spacemaker Press) p.51.
- ⁴⁸ Bloom, “Cultural Colossi: Lincoln Center at 19,” p.35.
- ⁴⁹ “enclave of relaxation...,” Murray Schumach, “Damrosch Park Sounds A Quiet Note,” *The New York Times*, August 4, 1972, p.33; “which has nothing....” Barnes, “Lincoln Center: Bravos and Barbs for America’s Number One Cultural Supermarket,” p.42; “a pretty stupid...,” Interview with Paul Goldberger, January 9, 2002.
- ⁵⁰ “a halved onion...,” as quoted in Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, David Fishman, “Lincoln Square,” in *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, Inc., 1995) p.713; “ugly” in Robert Kotlowitz, “If You Must Build A Cultural Center,” *Harper’s Magazine*, July 1967, v.235, p.96.
- ⁵¹ Ken Smith, “Preserving a Modernist Legacy,” *Harvard University Graduate School of Design*, Fall 1996, p.16.
- ⁵² Jane Jacobs, “The uses of neighborhood parks,” *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1961, reprint, 1992) p.102.
- ⁵³ Paul Spencer Byard, “Afterword,” *The Architecture of Additions: Design and Regulation*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998) p.182.

D. The Issue of Non-Durable Materials

One of Lincoln Center's most tangible problems—and one that is more prevalent among buildings of the modern movement than those that pre-date it—concerns the ongoing maintenance of non-durable materials. While issues regarding impermanence have typically resulted from mass-produced, experimental building materials used in conjunction with modern, untested construction technologies, Lincoln Center's problems have resulted from a use of natural materials that have been modified and applied in ways that are not always conducive to their longevity. While this means of implementation does not characterize all of its buildings or its landscaping, it has been significant enough to have required technical assistance from professionals outside of the center's maintenance staff.

Travertine Cladding and Paving

Specifically, the main issues of non-durability concern the use of Roman travertine as a cladding material on its buildings and as a paving material in its plazas, and the planting of London plane trees in its planters. Pietro Belluschi's suggestion to use travertine as the center's primary cladding material was one that was that fraught with symbolism, and enthusiastically endorsed by the center's architects. A material known for its associations with classical Rome, the travertine for Lincoln Center was acquired from the Bagni di Tivoli, a centuries-old Italian quarry, which had provided the marble for the Colosseum, among other early Roman

buildings.¹ When asked why it was chosen, Philip Johnson responded that it reflected a tendency in modern architecture to “pick materials that grow old more beautifully.”²

Although Johnson’s response certainly did not describe the majority of modern architecture, which ostensibly looked more beautiful upon completion than twenty or thirty years after it was built, it did sum up the aspirations of Lincoln Center’s founders and designers. In 1956, John D. Rockefeller, III, was quoted as saying, “We are not building for just ’56 or ’57 or ’58. We are thinking of something that will last for generations.”³ Similarly, four years later, music critic, Harold C. Schonberg, praised the idea for “carefully arranged buildings, square or rectangular, gleaming in white travertine (the Italian marble of which St. Peter’s in Rome is made)...”⁴ Striving for cohesion and monumentality through their use of Roman travertine, these founders and designers unfortunately chose a material that was better suited to the heat of Italian summers than it was to the frost of New York’s winters.

A sedimentary rock that is classified as marble because of its polished qualities, travertine is a limestone, formed from spring or cave waters that have washed over an open cellular bedding plane. Although the use of travertine as a thin-stone veneer began at the end of the nineteenth century when skeleton-frame construction became popular, it was primarily used in interiors, street-level arcades, storefronts and bulkheads due to primitive attachment systems.⁵ By the 1950s, both attachment and material fabrication technology had advanced to the extent that thin-stone veneer cladding “became widely embraced by architects,” thereby “play[ing] a major role in defining postmodern architecture.”⁶ Thus, the travertine at Lincoln Center was considered both a building material of its time, and one for the ages.

However, by 1986, it was apparent that the material had fallen somewhat short of its long-term expectancy. Employing stabilization techniques until a full assessment could be performed, the architecture, engineering and conservation firm of Wiss, Janney, Elster, made some important discoveries and distinctions about the travertine installed at Lincoln Center. According to one of the firm's architects, Kyle Normandin, studies at the time concluded that the bedding planes of the fins clad with travertine on the north and south facades of the Metropolitan Opera House had been mounted in a vertical orientation, making them susceptible to water infiltration.⁷ Unlike most of the cladding at the center, this issue was further aggravated by the fact that the fins had exposure to the elements on three of their four sides.

As a result of this compounded exposure and orientation, the fins suffered from intermittent spalling and cracking. Subsequently, two types of in situ restoration techniques, known as dutchman and stitch repair, were employed to prevent further damage, in addition to panel replacements. Traditionally associated with woodworking, dutchman entails carving out the damaged piece and replacing it with a more complete version. On the other hand, stitch repair involves routing one or two areas perpendicular to the marble's crack, and placing clamps in the routed area[s]. After doing so, the crack is then filled with an epoxy, as routed and cracked areas are smoothed over with a mortar mixture to approximate the travertine color and texture.

Although these interventions have succeeded in arresting damage in some of the areas of the opera house, several other buildings in the complex, including Avery Fisher Hall and the New York State Theater, have had similar problems of cracks, spalls, joint displacements and staining, and have either been repaired, replaced or

not yet addressed.⁸ City mandates, such as Local Law 10, have been effective in ensuring that the center's travertine cladding undergoes regular maintenance checks in order to prevent any potential accidents from occurring. However, this has not eliminated the problem of the deterioration itself, which continues as a result of water seepage into the panel joints, compromising underlying anchors that explode from within during freeze-thaw cycles, resulting in cracked panels.

While these interventions have been effective in arresting damage and preventing potential safety hazards, they have not been optimal in terms of preserving the buildings' modern aesthetic.⁹ In selecting fins for his secondary facades, Harrison had said that he "wished to present a feeling of solidity as well as luminosity which is gained by the light reflected on the sides of these louvers when seen on an angle."¹⁰ As Kyle Normandin and his colleague, M. Petermann, asserted in their paper entitled, "The International Power Style of the Modern Movement: Part One - Aesthetic Challenges of Preserving Dimensional Stone Cladding:"

One of the more difficult challenges in addressing buildings of the modern movement is that a great many works of architecture were designed based upon the effects of light, transparency, reflection, and plasticity of space (incorporeal aesthetic). The architecture of the modern movement was often looked upon as 'pure' because of its expressive and streamlined use of manufactured materials such as glass, masonry and steel...In fact, the characteristic forms of modernism were also in reaction and contrast to previous forms of architecture which contained greater applications of decorative arts. What was liberating to modern architects was the focus of architectural production on spatial plasticity, reflection, transparency and light.¹¹

Thus, while traditional repairs, such as the dutchman and stitch repairs used on the travertine at Lincoln Center, may be appropriate for craft or vernacular wood-working construction, on this type of modern construction they dramatically alter the purity and continuity of its marble-faced planes, thereby compromising the designers' original intent.

The other noticeable area where the Roman travertine has been damaged, or repaired rather than replaced, is on the plaza steps and paving. A close inspection of the Columbus Avenue stairs inspires conflicting responses: While one of the stairs has been severely compromised by a dutchman consisting of concrete, other stairs reveal the beautiful aging that Johnson alluded to in his justification for the material. In addition, the concentric, radiating travertine paving shows cracking in some areas, attributable to the maintenance vehicles and festival scaffolding that take their toll on its semi-durable surface. Over ten years ago, the director of operations for Lincoln Center maintained that "eventually all the travertine steps, which get the hardest pounding, will be replaced by granite or some other harder material."¹² At present, the travertine stairway at Columbus Avenue is largely intact; however, given the threat of liability, might be subject to change in the near future.

However, other more substantial changes may be imminent. In November 1998, the Lincoln Center Board of Directors resolved to create the Committee for the 21st Century. Intent on commissioning a "study and report on the scope of capital needs, from the practical to the utopian, for the entire campus," the committee engaged the architectural and planning firm of Beyer Blinder Belle to perform a capital needs survey.¹³ In their survey of the Metropolitan Opera House, the firm

noted, “based on the continued deteriorating condition of the travertine, consideration should be given to the replacement of the travertine with a cladding material that is similar in appearance but is more durable and requires less maintenance.”¹⁴ This recommendation naturally poses questions as to appropriate remedies for non-durable materials.

Adopting a preservation approach based on the authenticity of utility and intent, within the context of character-defining features, becomes a complex issue in an analysis of this material, as it was used at Lincoln Center. On the one hand, the travertine on the north and south facades of the Metropolitan Opera House did not last until 1985, let alone, “for generations to come,” and merits serious consideration for a substitute stone cladding. On the other hand, travertine was obviously chosen for its evocation of ancient Rome, and its symbols of timelessness, as manifested in the former’s monumental, gracefully-aging architecture. Yet, the character-defining features of these north and south facades, while clad in beige-white, multi-layered and shaded panels of travertine, were also meant to be expressive of the opera house’s verticality.

From this perspective, it becomes difficult to argue in favor of inappropriate repairs and yearly replacements-in-kind of original materials that are so fundamentally in opposition to the building’s longevity and significance. As noted earlier, DOCOMOMO has declared “The authenticity of the concept (i.e. the social and cultural intentions) of the original design and realisation (sic) forms the most important aspect of the preservation of 20th Century architecture and urban planning.”¹⁵ Consistent with this preservation philosophy, Normandin and Petermann reasoned,

“For modernism, our challenge is not only to address physical material failures but to also preserve this incorporeal aesthetic.”¹⁶ While Secretary of the Interior Standards would advise against this type of substitute replacement and advocate discreet repairs in kind, replacement with a substitute material would honor the building’s overall modern aesthetic, rather than relying on inappropriate, short-term solutions.¹⁷ For these reasons, substitute materials should be encouraged when short-termed remedies compromise the overall aesthetic of the building. Engaging in piecemeal restorations and replacements of a material that has a severely limited life expectancy does not serve the building, nor the qualities which contribute to its significance.

London Plane Trees

The alteration of modern landscape elements represents one of the most difficult challenges within the preservation community. Often under the private ownership of stewards who are ignorant of their designs’ value, these natural resources are significantly altered so as to compromise their modern aesthetic. In 1989 and 1993, the character of Dan Kiley’s Plaza North and South landscape at Lincoln Center was dramatically altered, respectively, thus robbing these two plazas of his distinctive imprint. According to landscape architect and preservationist, Ken Smith, these alterations occurred because of damage to the underground parking roof caused by tree root expansion; a vulnerability to tree disease; and an ignorance about modern landscape design—both in terms of the importance of a particular species and the way in which it was configured.¹⁸

On April 23, 1990, *The New York Times* reported that the quartets of London plane trees within the north plaza's fourteen planters had been "cleaned out" and were being replaced with single "Aristocrat nonfruit-bearing pear tree[s] with a supporting cast of azaleas."¹⁹ At the time, there was no explanation as to why the change was made. Despite Kiley's original instructions to the Lincoln Center organization to clip the trees above- and below- ground, it opted to replace them with a reduced number of an entirely different species. Kiley later wrote, "Sadly, this action emasculated the volumetric power of the original planting plan and severed the link between the architecture of plantings and buildings that together form a civic space of integrity."²⁰ Another landscape architect, Peter Walker, saw the replacement as endemic of a mindset that has generally prevailed among stewards of modern landscapes: "The Kiley design was changed inadvertently because it wasn't seen as something. Therefore you could change it. Because it wasn't anything."²¹ When later informed about Kiley's distinguished achievements, Lincoln Center's director of operations admitted that the renowned architect's involvement had not even been acknowledged in the organization's historical records."²²

Lack of institutional memory regarding modern landscape design has been cited as one of its most common failings. In the case of Dan Kiley's work at Lincoln Center, a cadre of modern landscape advocates confronted the parent organization about the alterations. Following a letter of protest, written by architect-historian Robert A.M. Stern in 1993, the New York chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects began lobbying on behalf of Kiley in order to open discussions between the master landscapist and the Lincoln Center organization. What transpired was not only

an advocacy group supporting Kiley's original plan, but also a meeting between the renowned architect and Lincoln Center's vice president. In this meeting and others that followed, the architect explained his motives and maintenance techniques to the center's executive and gardening staff. Although a dialogue was initiated between designer, management and maintenance, the London plane trees and their accompanying shrubbery were never reinstated in Plaza North.

Compounding the alteration, several years after the Plaza North incident, a similar situation occurred in Plaza South in which a total of sixteen London plane trees were replaced by single, Bradford pear trees. However, this time, the center countered that the trees were susceptible to cankerstain, a disease that is also known as London Plane disease.²³ Ironically, Beyer Blinder Belle's 1999 capital needs survey noted that the London Plane trees which had not been replaced in Plaza South "appear[ed] to be growing well," suggesting that the disease was either short-lived or non-existent.²⁴ Similarly, in another entry of the survey, the firm noted, "There is debate on the compact spacing of the trees; however, the existing London Plane trees are generally growing well."²⁵

In assessing the significance of the London plane trees within their context at Lincoln Center, it is important to understand what the landscape architect's work was attempting to convey. Lauded for his ability to order organic elements that provided abstractions of the architecture surrounding his designs, Kiley's work at Lincoln Center, especially in Plaza North, was one of the more distinctive fusions of landscaping within an urban setting. As described by Anne Raver in *The New York Times*, the London Plane trees "sculptured the air in a spatial pattern that echoed the strong horizontal

and vertical planes of the surrounding architecture.”²⁶ Raver also confirmed that in spite of Kiley’s plan, and his original instructions to the organization as to how to maintain it, the trees became root-bound, damaging the membrane of the parking roof below them.²⁷

The authenticity of utility and intent is particularly apt here as it exemplifies conflicts inherent between maintenance and intent. Dan Kiley, an acclaimed master in his field, found his work altered because of issues involving maintenance and disease, and a lack of documentation concerning his participation. Since these issues can determine the future of modern landscapes, it is essential for stewards of these areas to understand histories and significance before implementing change. Had the Lincoln Center staff understood how to care for the trees, as per the designer’s instructions, and the significance of the design itself, perhaps it would have been less inclined to compromise it. In the case of the North Plaza, which, over the years, has received critical accolades for its breathtaking vista, owing in part to the work of Dan Kiley, conflicting changes to this area should not be permitted and original design intent should be respected through configuration and materials.



57. Metropolitan Opera House north façade fins with Vivian Beaumont Theater in foreground.



58. Travertine Repairs:
Second fin from left: Dutchman
Third fin from left: Stitch Repair



59. Cracks in travertine pavers.



60. Cracks in travertine stairs.



61. Concrete repair of travertine stair.



62. Pre-1989 Lincoln Center Plaza North, with London plane trees



63. Post-1989 Lincoln Center Plaza North, with Bradford pear trees

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Lincoln Center Aids Ancient Spa," *The New York Times*, August 27, 1963, p.33.
- ² Quoted in *ibid.*, p.63.
- ³ Quoted in Seymour Peck, "A Rockefeller Enters 'Show Biz,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, November 18, 1956, VI, p.15.
- ⁴ Harold C. Schonberg, "The Lincoln Center Vision Takes Form," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 11, 1960, VI, p.7. In a 1964 review of the New York State Theater, critic, Nelson Lansdale, said Lincoln Center's travertine "was expected to wear well in the city's acidulous climate and to improve in looks with age." Nelson Lansdale, "PREVIEW: NEW YORK STATE THEATER," *Dance Magazine*, March 1964, v.38, p.36.
- ⁵ Michael J. Scheffler, "Thin-Stone Veneer Building Facades: Evolution and Preservation," *Associated Preservation Technology Bulletin*, 2001, v.32, no.1, p.27.
- ⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁷ Interview with Kyle Normandin, Wiss Janney Elstner, November 26, 2001.
- ⁸ Normandin noted that the Juilliard School seemed to have the least problems with its travertine cladding, probably owing to the fact that it had one of the longest design phases, thereby giving its architects time to figure out the most durable means of installation. *ibid.*
- ⁹ This problem is compounded by the exorbitant cost to acquire and ship the material.
- ¹⁰ "Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Minutes of the Architects Panel Meeting," October 10, 1961, John D. Rockefeller 3rd Papers, Series 1, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller Files, Subseries 4: LINCOLN CENTER, Box 57, no.514 – "Architects, 1958-1961," Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, New York.
- ¹¹ Normandin, K., and N. Petermann. "The International Power Style of the Modern Movement: Part One - Aesthetic Challenges of Preserving Dimensional Stone Cladding." International Seminar on Historical Constructions in Guimaraes, Portugal, September 10-12, 2001, pp.2-3.
- ¹² Quoted in Richard F. Shepard, "At Lincoln Center, It's Regilding Time," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1990, p.B5.
- ¹³ Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Executive Summary," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey (Draft)*, December 6, 1999, p.1.
- ¹⁴ Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Program and Facility Assessment: Metropolitan Opera House," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey (Draft)*, December 6, 1999, p.9.
- ¹⁵ H.A.J. Henket and N. Tummers, "Authenticity of the Modern Movement," *NARA Conference On Authenticity*, Nara, Japan, November 1-6, 1994, (Japan: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995) p.328.
- ¹⁶ K. Normandin, "The International Power Style of the Modern Movement: Part One - Aesthetic Challenges of Preserving Dimensional Stone Cladding,"
- ¹⁷ In applying this same criterion of utility, intent and character-defining features to the other buildings, it is difficult to make a case for substitute materials, since most of them do not experience the same kind of exposure to the elements (thus negating the need for multiple repairs), nor do they have the same soaring character, expressed so powerfully by the opera house fins.
- ¹⁸ Ken Smith, "The Challenge of Preserving Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts," Charles A. Birnbaum, ed., *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture: Papers from the Wave Hill-National Park Service Conference*, November 1995, v.10, (Cambridge, MA: Spacemaker Press) pp51-52.
- ¹⁹ Shepard, "At Lincoln Center, It's Regilding Time," p.B5.
- ²⁰ Dan Kiley, "Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, New York, 1960," in *Dan Kiley: The Complete Works of American Master Landscape Architect*, (NY: Bulfinch Press, 1999) p.57. It bears noting that now that the Bradford pear trees have matured, their branches occupy much more space horizontally than before, making them more consistent with Kiley's vision. On the other hand, having reduced the volume of four trees to one is still a significant mitigation in the design's "volumetric power."

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- ²¹ Quoted in Anne Raver, "Cherishing Landscapes as Living Art," *The New York Times*, III, November 30, 1995, p.C6.
- ²² Jerry A. Hastings, Director of Operations, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., as quoted in Ann Raver, "Cherishing Landscapes as Living Art," p.C6.
- ²³ "Destroying Trees to Save Them," *The New York Times*, September 19, 1993, VIII-CY, p.8.
- ²⁴ Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Public Plazas & Support Facilities," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey* (Draft), December 6, 1999, p.7.
- ²⁵ Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Damrosch Park & Guggenheim Bandshell," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey* (Draft), December 6, 1999, p.4.
- ²⁶ Raver, "Cherishing Landscapes as Living Art," p.C6.
- ²⁷ Raver also corroborated the center's claim of a tree disease without specifying what it was. *ibid.*

E. New Development

The question of what to build and where is perhaps one of the most vexing issues for the Lincoln Center organization as it attempts to respond to its constituents' expanding needs. Since the completion of its performing arts campus in 1969, the organization has endorsed two new developments—one, on-site and one, off-campus---and is now wrestling with a third one which could potentially result in a break from its union, and threaten the vitality of one of its other member constituents. As the parent organization to a body of constituents whose interests are often at odds with one another, the executives of Lincoln Center, Inc. have had to be counselors and mediators in this regard—in addition to their regular roles as fundraisers, campus stewards, program facilitators and developers.

The need for space always has been and always will be an issue for thriving cultural institutions.¹ Compounded by an institution such as Lincoln Center, with its overflowing constituency of thirteen organizations, allocating existing and proposed space becomes an issue fraught with conflict as its various members vie for limited resources. Not surprisingly, in its summary of the organizations' capital needs, the architectural and planning firm of Beyer Blinder Belle ranked the need for additional space as the overriding issue, stating:

Lack of space to accommodate the current level of programming, services and desired amenities is by far the greatest challenge facing many of the Constituents on campus today. Over the years, many of the Constituents have seen exponential growth in their programs, in areas such as educational outreach and fundraising, and have striven to provide space for these new programs which vie

for space with the original users. The need for increasing artist, donor and patron amenities, increased performance activity, changing technical requirements, and new catering and special events needs have combined to push the limits of the original buildings' program and design.²

Proposing solutions, Beyer Blinder Belle recommended first looking at existing space—including space that had been altered over time—in order to determine whether or not it should be reconfigured more efficiently to maximize use.³ After conducting its analysis, the firm concluded that, for most of the member organizations, some form of new development would remedy these problems.

Confronted with this knowledge, the question then becomes: Where should Lincoln Center's constituent organizations expand? As per the original terms of the center's Urban Renewal Plan, no more than 65% of the land on the Lincoln Center site was to be developed in order to sustain "an attractive open type of development."⁴ However, this agreement was later superceded by an amendment in March 1988 that allowed for the construction of the Samuel B. & David Rose Building and 3 Lincoln Center towers at the corner of Amsterdam Avenue between West 65th and West 66th Streets.⁵ Currently, existing buildings at Lincoln Center cover approximately 63% of the site, approaching the original maximum of 65%, envisioned by the City's planners. However, given the precedent of the 1988 zoning amendment, the center could conceivably develop on more than the remaining 2%, so long as it gets the necessary approvals from the Parks Department, the City Planning Commission and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, acting as the lead agency on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Although Lincoln Center is within a C4-7 District, giving its parent organization an as-of-right Floor Area Ratio of 10, its actual square footage of development rights are ambiguous in one of its main lots. Lot 1, containing the Metropolitan Opera House, Avery Fisher Hall, Josie Robertson Plaza and Lincoln Center Plaza North, has several variables which render its development potential uncertain. One variable concerns its overlaying easements of the plaza areas, which may or may not be considered part of Lincoln Center, Inc.'s domain. Another concerns the ambiguity regarding the curb level definition, which can either be taken from the Amsterdam Street level further below, or the plaza level. Consequently, the range of development rights for Lot 1 could range between 820,000 square feet, if the development were limited to the footprints of the existing buildings, or 2,720,000 square feet, if the development were to include the building footprints and plazas.⁶ This represents a substantial difference in development potential which could alter the campus dramatically. Other lots containing single buildings, such as the New York State Theater, the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Juilliard School, have boundaries that are more easily definable, and therefore, have calculable development rights.⁷ All of the currently proposed rooftop additions to Avery Fisher Hall, the Vivian Beaumont Theater and the Juilliard School are within the buildings' as-of-right zoning.⁸

Starting in 1988, Lincoln Center, Inc. began investigating ways in which to reconcile their constituents' expanding needs with its existing buildings' limited resources. The first development deal actually consisted of two high-rise proposals on its campus, resulting in the erection of the center-owned Samuel B. and David Rose Building, and the privately-owned 3 Lincoln Center in 1991. The second new

development project, Frederick P. Rose Hall within the mixed-use Columbus Center, originally initiated in 1997, is currently under construction at Columbus Circle, and will primarily house Jazz at Lincoln Center. The third new development, which at this time remains uncertain, could be a new off-site facility for New York City Opera. An analysis of these projects offers insight about the beneficial yet ambiguous role real estate development can play, through its generation of revenue and space, which are often at odds with preservation concerns of context and appropriateness.

The Samuel B. and David Rose Building / 3 Lincoln Center

Emulating the success of other cultural institutions that have sold their development rights in exchange for monetary gain, Lincoln Center, Inc. made an even more lucrative deal over ten years ago that not only augmented its budget, but also its resources. In exchange for \$48.5 million dollars and the construction of a new twenty-eight-story, multi-use tower, Lincoln Center, Inc. transferred some of its development rights to the Stillman Group of Scarsdale for the erection of a sixty-story condominium.⁹ Called the Samuel B. and David Rose Building, and 3 Lincoln Center, respectively, these towers affirm the monetary and programmatic benefits inherent in capitalizing on real estate assets for a non-profit organization. At the same time, however, they raise ambiguous issues about appropriateness and context as it relates to new non-profit development on-campus and within a community.

One of the most contentious issues for community residents and preservationists alike is the prospect of non-contextual development. In this regard, Lincoln Center has been an unrelenting catalyst, having spawned a series of high-rise

residential and mixed-use developments in an area historically defined by low-rise institutional and residential buildings, as well as mid-rise factory and mixed-use buildings.¹⁰ By the same token, the center has also been a catalyst for preservation. As early as 1961, while the campus was still under construction, Herbert Kupferberg, noting how “Impetus has been given to improvement plans for the entire West Side,” called the center “a magnificent success.”¹¹ Four years later, in 1966, a *Times* headline proclaimed “Lincoln Center Brings Changes,” and detailed both new development and preservation efforts which were resulting from the construction of the cultural complex.¹²

Yet, for all of its preservation-related activities, the Lincoln Center area has become a breeding ground for large-scale, non-contextual development. As developers could rightfully argue, context has most definitely changed in the area, which has been upzoned as a consequence of the 1969 Lincoln Square Special Purpose District. Furthermore, this developmental activity, while typifying the gentrification endemic to the area, has also been advantageous to the City as a whole by creating tax revenue, employment and a modicum of affordable housing.¹³ However, this does not negate the fact that many historic low- and mid- rise buildings still exist, which are undeniably being impacted by this type of large-scale development. Ultimately, as a district that is not protected by landmark status, the immediate vicinity of Lincoln Center will most likely continue to evolve into another Midtown East, thereby altering the context of its historic resources.

The Lincoln Center-owned Samuel B. and David Rose Building and the privately-owned 3 Lincoln Center embody the ambiguous issues inherent in a not-for-

profit institution that has capitalized on its real estate assets in order to further its mission. In an article entitled, "A Shot of Cultural Adrenaline At Lincoln Center," Paul Goldberger asked, "Why shouldn't the institution whose real estate has made profits for so many others get a little something for its own balance sheet?"¹⁴ Perhaps \$48.5 million dollars and a new multi-purpose tower are considered inconsequential in the world of New York real estate, yet these projects do reveal the potential for conflict between non-profit developers and preservationists.

In spite of the fact that Lincoln Center was deemed eligible for listing on the State Register only recently, the Lincoln Center organization nevertheless encouraged a design that was contextual to its postwar complex—if not to the surrounding community. Standing like a campanile at the center's northwest corner, the Rose Building, designed by Davis, Brody & Associates, references some of the details of its neighbor without trying to mimic them.¹⁵ Consisting of a twelve-story base and seventeen-story dormitory tower, the Rose Building has made a significant contribution toward alleviating the constituents' spatial needs.¹⁶ Housed within are facilities for the Juilliard School, Lincoln Center, Inc., City Center Music & Drama Inc., the Film Society, the Chamber Music Society, Lincoln Center Institute, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, New York City Ballet, the New York Philharmonic and the School of American Ballet. Comparable in its complexity of program to the adjacent Juilliard School, the Rose building contains a parking garage in its basement, a New York City firehouse and branch library on its ground floor, and offices, theaters, rehearsal halls, a school and a cafeteria, and dormitory rooms on its upper floors.

Directly northeast of the Rose Building, sharing its base, 3 Lincoln Center, designed by Harman Jablin Architects, is a lesson in juxtaposition, with an inauspicious black glass envelope sheathing its colossal scale. Viewing the building from the performing arts center, Paul Goldberger, wrote, "It doesn't quite disappear, to be sure, but it is about as deferential as a 60-story skyscraper can be."¹⁷ Goldberger also commented on how the new developments corrected "significant flaws" in the center's original design by engaging the Amsterdam Avenue community through its westward orientation, and Davis, Brody & Associates' redesign of the West 65th Street overpass and adjacent plaza, making its connection to the Rose Building and other areas into "a viable urban presence."¹⁸

But for all of the benefits noted, what are its drawbacks? For one, at twenty-eight and sixty stories, respectively, these mammoth structures, together with the Juilliard School, have irrevocably encroached on their smaller-scale, historic neighbor next door, the Church of the Good Shepherd, designed by J.C. Cady & Co. in 1887.¹⁹ Lodged within a canyon of concrete, this Romanesque-Revival church's sense of place has been sadly reduced to an asphalt jungle.²⁰ In addition, 3 Lincoln Center sets a precedent in the area for sixty-story-buildings, which could be emulated in the coming decade, by other private developers willing to make, in the words of Goldberger, "a Faustian pact" with the Lincoln Center organization.²¹

Fortunately, the fact that Lincoln Center has been deemed eligible as an historic district, coupled with the conservative attitudes of some of its constituents, should help preclude it from any irresponsible future development. However, the issue of the Rose Building and 3 Lincoln Square demonstrate the extent to which non-profit

organizations can impact the community in their attempt to satisfy programmatic demands through new on-campus development. Goldberger reasoned:

There's no real answer to this question of the values of such trade-offs at Lincoln Center or elsewhere. We like to pretend that our cultural institutions are clean and pure not sullied by their connections to commerce, and the presence of a tower like 3 Lincoln Center stands, like Museum tower, as a constant reminder that they are not. Surely that is why buildings like this are troubling—they force us to confront a reality we might prefer to ignore. When a corporation writes a check to a cultural institution, the process of subsidy is invisible; when support comes in the form of a real-estate deal, its results stare us in the face at every moment.²²

Ironically, as Goldberger noted, for such a large-scale development, the visual impact on the campus itself has been minimal. In addition, the retention of the firehouse and the library are two major assets to the adjacent community. However, these amenities do not minimize the impact of this scale of development on the area's residents, who have to live with these buildings on a daily basis.

Applying a criterion based on an impact on character-defining features, and utility and intent, is naturally colored with contradictions. As previously discussed, the adverse effect on the campus' character-defining features were minimized through the placement and design of these buildings, which, have ultimately impacted their immediate, non-designated neighbors more than the complex at Lincoln Center. Furthermore, the intent of the original founders and designers was to create a model collection of facilities for the performing arts using state-of-the-art technology within each one. Certainly, the Rose Building succeeds admirably in this regard by satisfying a host of programmatic demands for a multitude of constituents.

On the other hand, 3 Lincoln Center suggests that original goals of artistic performance and education have either been compromised through the establishment of non-related activities—namely, luxury housing—or enhanced by the economic returns that such activities bring. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has always prided itself on its accomplishments in the realm of corporate fundraising, having set a precedent for other performing arts engaged in similar activities. In this regard, the organization’s deal with the Stillman Group would probably be considered exemplary. Thus, a case could be made for the Rose Building that demonstrates an authenticity of utility and intent, while a justification for 3 Lincoln Center, using this criterion, is rather convoluted and unjustifiable.

Frederick P. Rose Hall at Columbus Center

The imminent Frederick P. Rose Hall at Columbus Center signifies a promising new direction for the Lincoln Center organization, illustrating how public and private interests can partner in order to produce a premiere cultural asset. As the first performing arts venue under the auspices of Lincoln Center to be located off of its campus, Frederick P. Rose Hall will not only set a precedent for the parent organization, but also represent the fulfillment of an idea for a cultural complex, dating back to Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia’s administration.²³ Like its precedent, the current one at Columbus Circle was inspired by yet another mayor.

In July 1997, Mayor Rudolph Guiliani, after having met with executives of Lincoln Center and hearing their needs for an additional performance venue, gave his endorsement for a facility within the proposed Columbus Center.²⁴ In the following

weeks, the mayor was quoted as saying he felt it would be “enormously important” for the project to include a theater for jazz, opera or theater performances, capable of seating between 1,000 to 2,000 people.²⁵ However, as the Mayor was imposing his mandate for a new theater, the Lincoln Center organization was in the midst of negotiating the construction of a 1,200-seat, multi-purpose auditorium within another proposed mixed-use building, directly across the street from its complex, at 1926 Broadway.²⁶ Commenting on the mayor’s plan, and how it would affect their own, an unnamed executive from Lincoln Center retorted, “We’re not interested in two theaters.”²⁷

However, the mayor’s vision prevailed. Having convinced the Lincoln Center organization to expand beyond the immediate neighborhood, he publicly stated:

From my point of view the thing that will make the difference is, is the use a conforming use, does it fit that community? And that community is the cultural arts center of the world, and if we can enhance that, that would be something that would meet the differences in all of the different pros and cons of the different projects.²⁸

While the mayor was motivated to stretch the borders of culture, he also had another agenda. The new auditorium at 1926 Broadway would have cost the city approximately 60% of its building cost, while the Columbus Center proposal was to be largely financed by the developer and private donations.²⁹

Later, asserting his power over the state-run Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which owns the site, the mayor threatened to veto the MTA’s choice of a developer unless a performance venue was included in the developer’s plan.³⁰ The following year, Jazz at Lincoln Center was chosen to be the hall’s resident constituent

organization, in an area of the mixed-use building that would eventually include “two auditoriums, a club-size jazz café, two rehearsal studios and a classroom, all wired for recording broadcast and Webcast” at a cost of \$103 million.³¹ Although Jazz at Lincoln Center is intended to be the venues’ resident performance organization, it will only occupy the larger 1,100-seat concert hall three months out of the year, with other dance and music groups renting it out for the remaining time. Other programming will include educational programs during the daytime.

The Columbus Center site for Jazz at Lincoln Center is an example of how non-profit development can partner with the public-private sector in order to meet programmatic needs. An elaborate mixed-use facility, Columbus Center will be the headquarters for AOL-Time Warner, in addition to offering retail, a hotel, condominiums, broadcast studios and a parking garage. Having been established in 1996, Jazz at Lincoln Center has been somewhat of an orphan at the campus, occupying the enormous and ill-suited Avery Fisher Hall, and the more intimate but acoustically bright, Alice Tully Hall, during its tenure there. Deserving of a home of its own to promote a thoroughly American art form in a setting that is conducive to its acoustical needs, the location at Columbus Center will be a boon to its mission to educate through performance and instruction, attracting a diverse audience of users within the building and jazz lovers from beyond.

In addition to satisfying the spatial needs of one of its more recent constituents, Lincoln Center’s decision to endorse this off-campus location signals a broader approach to the performing arts center concept than what its founders had originally commissioned. No longer limited by the “physical and spiritual insulation” of a

centralized campus, this new facility will show the extent to which Lincoln Center can delve beyond the travertine-cladded walls of its campus as it veers toward the heart of New York. Architect, Rafael Viñoly said that he hopes to “create a space that puts jazz where it should be, which is essentially at the geographic and symbolic center of the this city.”³² Using jazz itself as a metaphor for his design, Viñoly said that he intends to break the separation that exists between audience and performer, saying, “This is what distinguishes jazz as a social statement. There is a sense of integration, of participation beyond just enjoyment.”³³ With the Frederick P. Rose Hall at Columbus Center, the authenticity of utility and intent is preserved as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts makes its mission of accessibility and outreach its directive for the 21st century.

Proposal for a New Opera House for New York City Opera

Perhaps no other issue at Lincoln Center epitomizes the conflict inherent in its redevelopment than New York City Opera’s desire to build a new opera house. An issue fraught with complexity and competing agendas, it has not only revealed dysfunction within the structure of the New York State Theater, but also within the Lincoln Center establishment. Lincoln Center, Inc. was originally established to assemble and organize a constituency of performing arts institutions, facilitate the development of its performing arts complex, and devise programming for special events and educational initiatives, supplementing regular performances, produced by its individual constituents.³⁴

Yet, its executive board members have been forced to act dual roles of conciliators and dictators in an effort to maintain cohesion among their constituents.

Organized as a federation—but in reality, a collection of separate institutions with no common purpose other than to generate publicity and funds as one entity—its concept of organizational centralization is inherently flawed.³⁵ As redevelopment organization president, Rebecca Robertson, noted, most of these institutions are famous and established enough to draw patrons and raise funds on their own, thereby eliminating the necessity for any joint constituency.³⁶ Furthermore, in spite of their contracted alliance under the parent organization, this cannot hide the fact that their missions are actually not aligned.

It is within this context of disparate interests that New York City Opera has expressed its desire for a more customized performance venue, suited to its needs. Housed within the New York State Theater since 1966, the opera company has voiced its inability to function at the level that it needs to due to acoustical problems, lack of rehearsal rooms, insufficient backstage and set storage areas. The company also cites the size of its house as being too large for the type of productions that are its specialty, citing the need for a house with 1,700 seats over the current theater's 2,779.³⁷

Admittedly, the New York State Theater was created specifically for dance. Designed by Philip Johnson, working closely with choreographer, George Balanchine, and noted stage designers, Walther Unruh and Donald Oenslager, the theater was originally meant to house New York City Ballet, in addition to another constituent, the Music Theater of Lincoln Center, Inc., which would offer light opera presentations. Focusing on a stage design that was ideally suited to the rigors of dance, Johnson and Balanchine also conceived of an auditorium that allowed for maximum audience visibility and perspective. Set within a 39-foot-high proscenium arch, the New York

State Theater's mammoth 56-by-60 foot wooden stage was specially constructed to give dancers extra buoyancy, featuring a front platform extension which could either facilitate additional areas for performance or be removed to house an orchestra.

Johnson was later quoted as saying, "I designed it for George," thereby affirming the fact that it was, according to *The New York Times*, the first theater in recorded history to have been designed expressly for a choreographer.³⁸

Undeniably, the New York State Theater has been a more successful dance theater than opera house. In 1982, the State Theater underwent a renovation that significantly altered some of its interior elements, including its proscenium arch. Some individuals, such as former Lincoln Center Chairwoman and former City Opera star, Beverly Sills, have suggested that these alterations deadened the theater's acoustics. After the renovation, she was quoted as saying, "'I can remember singing 'Lucia di Lammermoor' on this stage. The orchestra sound was so inaudible in certain places that I begged people in the wings to hum a few notes to me to make sure I was in the right key.'"³⁹ Contrasting this experience with performances before the 1982 renovation, Sills said, "[T]here were never any complaints about the acoustics. I never got a review that said, 'Too bad we can't hear her in a decent opera house...'"⁴⁰ She then offered, "What I would like to see is all the stuff that has been added, I'd like to see it removed. It would be interesting to strip it down to how it was the night the opera opened and...put some young singers on the stage and let's see what it sounds like."⁴¹ *Times* critic, Herbert Muschamp, also a proponent of the originally-configured space, insisted that it had lost its magic after its 1982 renovation and urged the center to restore it back to its original design.⁴²

However, City Opera's general and artistic manager, Paul Kellog, believes that dance and opera performance are mutually exclusive, and therefore unable to co-exist within the same theater. Corroborating his theory, Kellog has cited its original designers' determination to muffle footfalls at the cost of amplifying voices. Yet, these divergent activities never seem to be at issue with the neighboring Metropolitan Opera House, which showcases the American Ballet Theater and other dance companies when its own company is not in performance. Yet, it could be argued that the Met has always been first and foremost designed for opera, thereby rendering any discussion of its inadequacies as a dance theater moot.

Proposing a remedy to counter the inadequacies of the State Theater, City Opera campaigned to build a new opera house in Damrosch Park. This in turn ignited resistance from the Metropolitan Opera Association, along with other members of the parent organization, as the opposition justifiably asserted that the public space in Damrosch Park was not theirs for the taking.⁴³ After having voted on the proposal, it was determined that the park was not an option. Contracted to stay at the New York State Theater until 2014, City Opera could leave prematurely so long as it covers its share of the operating costs at its current house. However, it would also bear the burden of keeping its new house in operation when it was not in season, estimated to be as high as \$100,000 a week.⁴⁴ Voicing his doubts, Metropolitan Opera Association, General Manager, Joseph Volpe said:

If the City Opera wants to build a building, have its own opera house and be off campus, that's fine with me. The question I've raised is, If they can find the money to build a new building, feasibility study or not, how do you know

they can find the money to keep it running? If they were to go bust, who would have the responsibility of maintaining the building—would it be Lincoln Center and the constituents and we'd be responsible for 30 percent? No, I can't be put in that position.⁴⁵

Volpe raises relevant issues about City Opera's proposed physical separation, and the negative ramifications it could have on their association with the constituency.

Echoing Volpe, Beverly Sills said, "I think they will be able to raise the money to build a new house. What has to be asked is, can you get endowment money to maintain the house? There are a lot practicalities that trouble me."⁴⁶ Leaving Lincoln Center could also affect other constituent economies if, for instance, American Ballet Theater were to relocate from the Metropolitan Opera House to the State Theater, in order to share the latter house part of the year with New York City Ballet. Furthermore, charges for the common areas would most likely increase for all constituents if the opera company relocated off-campus.

Of course, operational expenses are of central concern to every non-profit institution, and could weigh heavily in City Opera's future, should it decide to relocate. However, there has been no debate regarding Jazz at Lincoln Center's operating costs among the organization's board members since it made its decision to relocate off-campus. Moreover, there has been no published commentary suggesting the loss of its membership status within the parent organization as a consequence of its decision to move. To its credit, New York City Opera has a faithful following that has been growing in past years, drawing an audience that wants to be challenged by

new works, lesser-known classics and non-traditional interpretations of standard repertory pieces.

Despite Volpe and Sills' conservative views, Lincoln Center appears to be making a substantial investment in City Opera's new facility if it opts to go elsewhere. Under the current terms of the redevelopment plan, if the opera company stays in the New York State Theater, the building would undergo an \$87 million renovation in an attempt to bring it up to operatic standards. If the company chooses to build a new facility off-campus, the parent organization will contribute \$240 million for a new opera house.⁴⁷

While its leaving may negatively impact New York City Ballet, if it stays and the theater is altered, it may compromise the auditorium's excellence as a dance theater. Furthermore, it will still not solve the opera company's desire for an auditorium that is half as big as its current house. According to the *New York Times*, a minimum lot area of 200 feet by 260 feet would be required to build a new facility. Nevertheless, it can be done, as evidenced by the imminent venue that is planned for Columbus Center, measuring 100,000 square feet.⁴⁸ Although off-campus proposals have included the site of the American Red Cross Headquarters on Amsterdam Avenue, between West 66th and West 67th Streets, and the imminent Bloomberg Tower, between Lexington and Third Avenues, between East 58th and East 59th Streets, both of them have been deemed unfeasible.⁴⁹

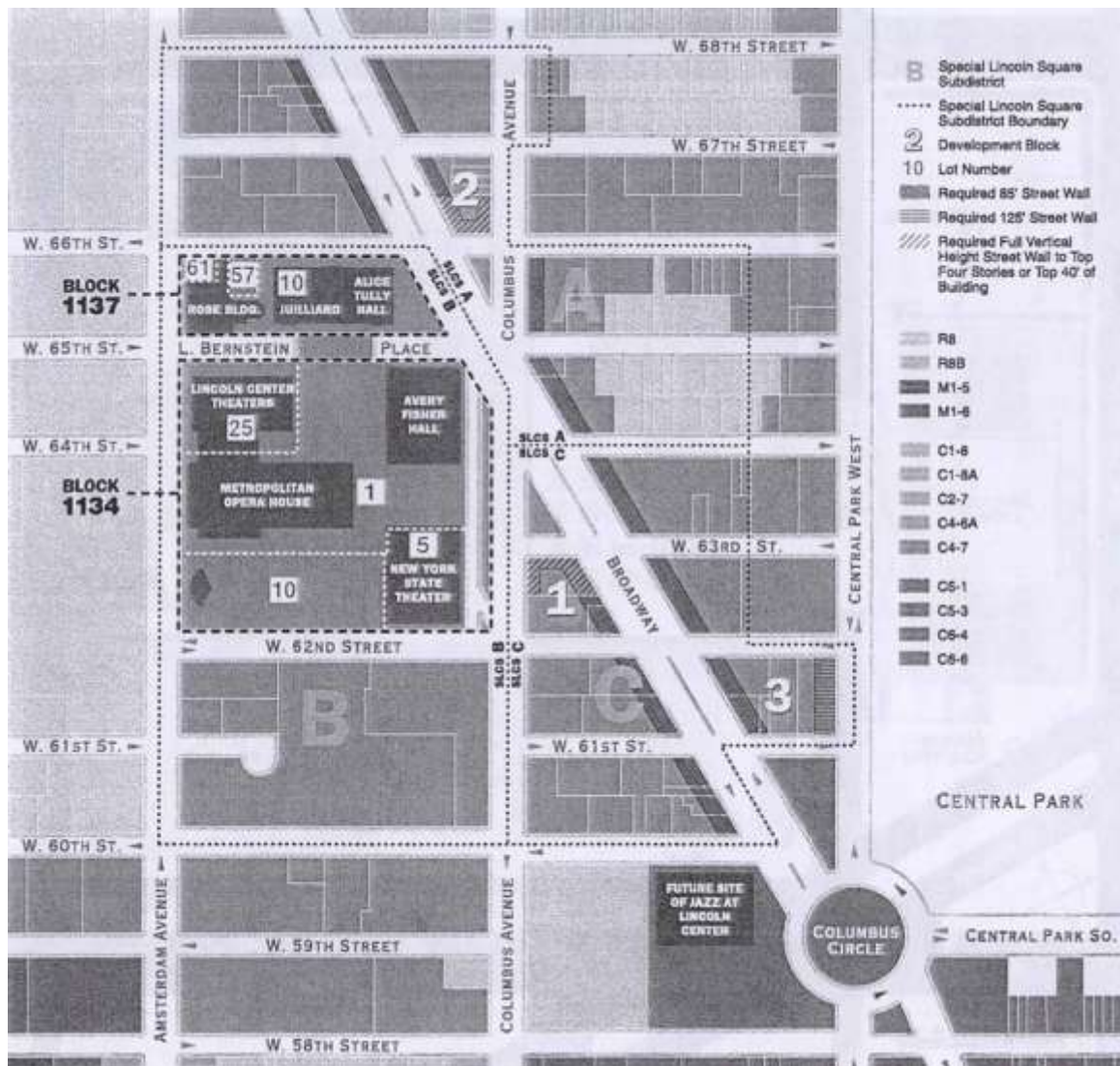
The latest plan, and certainly the most ambitious, is for the opera company to be integrated into a cultural complex at the World Trade Center site. Announced on February 28th of this year, this proposal includes an opera house, a dance theater and

a possible museum.⁵⁰ For several reasons, this appears to be the best plan, and one that could serve Lincoln Center immensely. For one, it would give the opera company a space that is customized to its needs. Second, this move would alleviate the ongoing conflict between it and the Metropolitan Opera Association, while, at the same time, bring the flagship campus greater attention. Third, if another dance company shared the space with New York City Ballet, it would allow the New York State Theater to flourish as a full-time dance theater, fulfilling the primary intent of its original design team.

In addition, an arts complex at the World Trade Center site would be an important economic and cultural anchor in Lower Manhattan, bridging the state and city's needs for a civic-minded venture with one that would encourage commercial activity. Lincoln Center and other cultural centers have been successful tools for urban revitalization. Steve Wolff, president of AMS Planning and Research, a consulting firm that specializes in the development of performing arts centers and museums, said, "City building, rejuvenation, and community development are prime reasons such projects get built."⁵¹ The Lower Manhattan complex, capitalizing on the anticipation of the proposed Guggenheim Museum on the East River, could signal a new era in the life of the district that would be conducive to its relatively recent transformation as a residential area.⁵² Complementing the existing commercial activity that transpires during the day, this proposed cultural center, housing City Opera, could facilitate more nighttime use in the area, thereby leading to more retail activity.

But beyond these tangible benefits, City Opera's inclusion at Ground Zero would be a revitalizing influence, and an appropriate one, as a living memorial to the

victims of September 11th. Originally touted by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia as the “the people’s opera company,” because of its mission to bring opera to individuals of all incomes through its affordable ticket prices, City Opera would continue to fulfill its democratic mission in a culturally-neglected area of Manhattan.⁵³ Moreover, it would use opera as a means of catharsis, providing a place of community for those who were directly connected to the tragedy. An opera house for New York City Opera, an assembly hall, a theater for local presentations—the possibilities for revitalizing the devastated area abound.



64. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Zoning Map.



65. Samuel B. and David Rose Building, and
3 Lincoln Center, view from Lincoln Center Plaza
North.



66. Church of the Good Shepherd, view south.



67. Computer rendering of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall.



68. Davis Brody Bond Architects proposal for World Trade Center Space Frame.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ A random sampling of New York's most powerful arts organizations at present, such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carnegie Hall and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, shows a plethora of expansion projects either being planned or underway.
- ² Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Executive Summary," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey (Draft)*, December 6, 1999, p.5.
- ³ It bears noting that BBB's survey posits the fact that changes over time may not have been the most productive, and that reconfiguring and restoring these areas to their original plan and use may be the most effective means of maximizing space. *ibid.*
- ⁴ City Planning Commission of the City of New York...*Lincoln Square Urban Renewal Plan & Project*, CP 13508, October 2, 1957, Cal. No. 2, p.11.
- ⁵ Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Executive Summary," p.3.
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p.4.
- ⁷ For example, the New York State Theater currently occupies less than 284,446 square feet of its potential 713,328 square feet of development rights, as per a maximum F.A.R. of 10. On the other hand, as per the 1988 amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan, prepared in accordance with the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, the Juilliard School may not develop its remaining 230,000 square feet as-of-right. Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, *ibid.*, p.4.
- ⁸ In addition to the aforementioned build-out of Alice Tully Hall lobby onto the forecourt area on Broadway and West 65th Street, the proposal for the Juilliard School entails filling in existing courtyards, located on the school's top level. Interview with Andrew Berlinger, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP Project Associate, December 12, 2001, and co-author, *Lincoln Center's Program and Facility Assessment*, dated December 6, 1999.
- ⁹ Paul Goldberger, "A Shot of Cultural Adrenaline At Lincoln Center," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1991, II, p.29.
- ¹⁰ For the purposes of examining the Lincoln Center area, the author defines low-rise as being three to seven stories and mid-rise as being eight to fourteen stories. For historic photos of the Lincoln Center area, see Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, David Fishman, "Lincoln Square," in *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial*, (New York: The Monacelli Press, Inc., 1995) p.675-676.
- ¹¹ Herbert Kupferberg, "The Culture Monopoly at Lincoln Center," *Harper's Magazine*, October 1961, v.223, p.96.
- ¹² Glenn Fowler, "Lincoln Center Brings Changes," *The New York Times*, September 16, 1962, p.45.
- ¹³ Some of the mixed-use and residential high-rises in the area have taken advantage of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit as a means of obtaining rights to develop additional square footage in exchange for providing at least 20% of affordable housing. Conversation with Thomas Bogle, Ernst & Young, November 8, 2001.
- ¹⁴ Goldberger, "A Shot of Cultural Adrenaline At Lincoln Center," p.29.
- ¹⁵ These details can be seen in its lower floors' fenestration, which references the Juilliard School, and its pink buff Valder granite cladding, which references the Roman travertine cladding of the Lincoln Center campus.
- ¹⁶ For information on the Rose Building, see Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects & Planners LLP, "Samuel B. & David Rose Building," *Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Capital Needs Survey (Draft)*, December 6, 1999, p.14.
- ¹⁷ Goldberger, "A Shot of Cultural Adrenaline At Lincoln Center," p.29.
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Ironically, J.C. Cady was also the architect of the old Metropolitan Opera House.
- ²⁰ The Church of the Good Shepherd's survival on the Lincoln Center-dominated parcel of land can be attributable to the fact that under Title I of the National Housing Act of 1949, churches were exempt from slum clearance activities.

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- ²¹ Goldberger, "A Shot of Cultural Adrenaline At Lincoln Center," p.29.
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ In 1935, responding to the Metropolitan Opera Company's desire to relocate, Mayor LaGuardia had introduced a scheme whereby the Metropolitan Opera Company would join the New York Philharmonic (formerly known as the Philharmonic Symphony-Society) as a part of a municipal arts center to be located at Columbus Circle. However, due to a lack of commitment of funds, the project was never realized. Victoria Newhouse, "The Metropolitan Opera House: beginnings," in Wallace K. Harrison, *Architect*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) p.200.
- ²⁴ David M. Halbfinger, "Mayor's Coliseum Plan Threatens Lincoln Center Expansion," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1997, II, p.B1.
- ²⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ²⁶ *ibid.*
- ²⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*
- ²⁸ Quoted in David Firestone, "Lincoln Center Is 'Interested' In a Theater at Coliseum Site," *The New York Times*, July 29, 1997, p.B3.
- ²⁹ According to a mayoral aide, 40% would have come from the City's Trust for Cultural Resources and 20% would have come from the City's capital budget. Halbfinger, "Mayor's Coliseum Plan Threatens Lincoln Center Expansion," p.B1.
- ³⁰ Firestone, "Lincoln Center Is 'Interested' In a Theater at Coliseum Site," p.B3.
- ³¹ Estimates since then have risen to \$115 million. Funding for the venture will be coming largely from a variety of private sources, including the estate of Frederick P. Rose, for whom the complex is named, as well as foundation grants and corporate contributions. Jon Pareles, "Jazz Suite With a Park View," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2000, p.A1.
- ³² Quoted in *ibid.*
- ³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.A3.
- ³⁴ For information on the history of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., see Edgar B. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, (New York: New York University Press, 1980).
- ³⁵ This view was voiced to me by John Alschuler, Partner, Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Real Estate Consultants, on October 16, 2001; by Rebecca Robertson, President, Lincoln Center Development Project, Inc., on November 16, 2001; and by my advisor, Robert M. Paley, Vice President, Avalon Bay, on November 16, 2001.
- ³⁶ Interview with Rebecca Robertson, November 16, 2001.
- ³⁷ During the summer seasons, when it is not at Lincoln Center, City Opera performs at the 900-seat Glimmerglass Opera House in Cooperstown, New York to great acclaim. The company's management contends that when the company performs these same productions in the State Theater, its performances are lost in the larger house. Several years ago, in an effort to compensate for its acoustical deficiencies, its artistic and general director, Paul Kellog, installed a sound enhancement system, with microphones placed discreetly onstage and tiny speakers strategically located throughout the audience areas. This act, has been considered by some, including Lincoln Center Chairwoman, Beverly Sills, to be sacrilegious. Anthony Tommasini, "Beyond Renovation, Into the Stuff Of Dreams: Time for Artistic Vision At Lincoln Center," *The New York Times*, December 4, 2001, Arts, p.E1.
- ³⁸ Quoted in Hubert Saal, "Caution: Choreographer At Work," *The New York Times Magazine*, VI, Part II, p.18.
- ³⁹ Quoted in Robin Pogrebin, "Beverly Sills and Questions of Loyalty," *The New York Times*, March 30, 2002, at www.nytimes.com/2002/03/20/, p.1.
- ⁴⁰ Quoted in Frank Bruni, "Diva Among the Divas," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 6, 2002, VI, pp.22-23.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Robin Pogrebin, "To Stay or Go? City Opera Is Deciding on Its Home," *The New York Times*, December 19, 2001, p.E3.
- ⁴² Herbert Muschamp, "Lincoln Center's Enduring Vision," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1996, p.C25.
- ⁴³ Lincoln Center, Inc. Chairwoman, Beverly Sills, concurred with Joseph Volpe, asserting that Damrosch Park, being property of the City of New York, was not the center's to build upon. Bruni,

"Diva Among the Divas," p.22. This proposal and others concerning the redevelopment in turn caused the Metropolitan Opera Association to threaten to disassociate itself and its funding from the redevelopment project altogether.

⁴⁴ Pogrebin, "Beverly Sills and Questions of Loyalty," p.2.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Ralph Blumenthal and Robin Pogrebin, "Lincoln Center Renovation Plan Has Opera Houses at Odds," *The New York Times*, Metro, January 25, 2001, Metro, p.B1.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Robin Pogrebin, "New Chief Says It's Go on Lincoln Center," *The New York Times*, March 1, 2002, p.2, at www.nytimes.com/2002/03/01/arts/music/01LEVY.html.

⁴⁷ In addition, a private donor named Robert W. Wilson, describing the State Theater as "a completely unsuitable space," has promised a pledge of \$50 million toward new construction. Quoted in Pogrebin, "To Stay or Go? City Opera Is Deciding on Its Home," p.E3.

⁴⁸ Pareles, "Jazz Suite With a Park View," p.A1; Opera house requirements, Pogrebin, "To Stay or Go? City Opera Is Deciding on Its Home," p.E1.

⁴⁹ Regarding the American Red Cross site, Andrew Berlinger informed me that the dimensions of the lot were not large enough to accommodate the house although measurements of the site indicate that it is only 10 feet shy of the 260 feet length needed. Interview with Andrew Berlinger, Project Associate, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, December 12, 2001. Regarding the Bloomberg site, Steven Roth, Chairman of Vornado Realty Trust, its developer, claimed, "I don't even know what opera is. It's the most absurd thing I've ever heard. And it's the first I've heard of it." Quoted in Pogrebin, "To Stay or Go? City Opera Is Deciding on Its Home," p.E3.

⁵⁰ Ironically, for all its stated desires for a much smaller opera house, this proposal is for a 2,200-seat house. Robin Pogrebin, "City Opera Seeks Partners for Move to Ground Zero," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2002, p.1 at www.nytimes.com/2002/02/28/arts/28PERF.html.

⁵¹ Quoted in "Performing Arts Centers: Using Art to Revive Cities," *Architectural Record*, May 1999, v.187, n.5, p.223.

⁵² John Alschuler, New York real estate consultant, Brooklyn Academy of Music Cultural District, Brooklyn Bridge Park and the High Line, is also a professor of real estate development at Columbia University. Professor Alschuler contends that New York City's future lies in its cultural offerings, not in its financial industry, which has been diminishing over time. John Alschuler, "Brooklyn Academy of Music Cultural District" lecture, Political Environment of Development, Real Estate Development Program, Columbia University, February 28, 2002.

⁵³ Quoted in www.nycopera.com/about/history.cfm, p.2.

CONCLUSION

Resolving the conflict between preservation, maintenance and redevelopment of the American postwar performing arts center requires a thoughtful analysis of significance, utility and intent. Exceptionally important works of their time yet largely flawed upon completion, these particular building and building groupings deserve to be recognized for their historic significance, but also modified in order to overcome their functional deficiencies. Like owners of both historic and more contemporary performance venues, whose livelihoods depend on attracting the greatest number of audience members, the stewards of the American postwar performing arts center have similar missions to draw audiences through acclaimed presentations and productions, comfortable and effective performance settings, and accessible and inviting facilities.

Like their historic counterparts, the buildings and plazas comprising the American postwar performing arts center merit protection for their historic and stylistic qualities which figure prominently within the evolution of the performing arts in America. Conceived in the late 18th century by Pierre L'Enfant, bolstered by a succession of senators and citizens in the early- and mid- part of the 20th century, revived during the Eisenhower era, and completed during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, these complexes represent the culmination of over one hundred and fifty years of cultural aspirations by our nation's leaders, planners and its citizens.

Planned and constructed between 1945 and 1971, and often customized for specific types of performances, these complexes were bold experiments in centralization on a comprehensive scale. Reflecting the cultural aspirations of the

postwar era to make the arts more integral in the lives of all Americans, the development of these centers also inspired private groups and individuals to lobby greater support and funding for the arts from federal, state and local governments. Furthermore, the creation of the American postwar performing arts center signaled unprecedented partnerships between public and private sectors, intent on making the United States a leader in the international cultural arena.

Complementing these cultural aspirations, the American postwar performing arts center is also exceptionally important for its contribution to the modern movement. Designed by acknowledged masters of the postwar era, such as Philip C. Johnson, Wallace K. Harrison, Edward Durrell Stone, Harry Weese, Max Abramovitz and Welton Beckett, these centers' largely formalistic designs were chosen to convey qualities of timelessness and grandeur, while allowing for interior spaces that could accommodate state-of-the-art theater technology. Similarly, other masters of postwar design, such as Eero Saarinen, Pietro Belluschi, Eduardo Catalano and Helge Westermann, adhered to International-style and brutalist design concepts which complemented their formalist neighbors. Mirroring these classically-inspired, minimalist buildings, other modern masters, such as Dan Kiley and Cornell Bridges and Troller, used symmetry, and geometric forms and patterns, to create cohesion and order through abstracted landscape designs. Taken together, these building and plaza ensembles represent some of the largest collaborative efforts of postwar planners and architects in the history of the world.

Yet, in spite of their historic and stylistic significance, these campuses require redevelopment schemes that will improve them, while respecting their character-

defining elements. In this regard, the case study of Lincoln Center offers valuable lessons as to how programmatic needs may be addressed, changes may be implemented and character-defining features may be retained. Confronted with a variety of issues which include inadequate and ineffective designs, limited accessibility, dysfunctional public space, non-durable materials and the need to expand, Lincoln Center is a comprehensive case study that rivals its comprehensive campus. Moreover, as the leading American postwar performing arts center, it has the potential to influence other centers' redevelopment proposals with its expanded preservation criterion.

Undeniably controversial, the specific case study regarding the expansion of the Metropolitan Opera House lobby is also one that can offer new approaches to preservation that recognizes long-standing deficiencies and honors original utility and intent. Conceived by an architect whose client consisted of a preponderance of professionals and lay people with disparate opinions regarding its design, the opera house was ultimately compromised due to the disruption of a singular vision. Since that time, its lobby has not only been ineffective in meeting the programmatic demands of its patrons by squeezing them into a compressed space at performance time, but has also hampered the views of its art, while threatening its existence with erratic climate fluctuations. Moreover, the lobby's façade has compromised the entire neo-Beaux Arts aesthetic of Josie Robertson Plaza by deferring to a void that serves no purpose, while isolating it from its neighboring buildings.

Using the same analysis in ascertaining programmatic needs as that which is used to ascribe significance is an effective means of correcting original deficiencies to

ensure its vitality as an operational performance space. Unnecessarily confined to a design that even its architect regretted, the stewards of the Metropolitan Opera House should have the authority to bring the original up to normal standards of functionality, while honoring its architect's intent. Surveying original construction documents as well as critical assessments can be important determiners of change, and the extent to which it should be implemented.

Similarly, this same methodology can be applied to the planning aspects of the American postwar performing arts center, as well as to the appraisal of public spaces contained within them, as shown by the several examples at Lincoln Center. Adhering to founders' and creators' aspirations of accessibility and program, these areas can potentially be transformed into thriving spaces that connect to their surrounding neighborhoods, inviting local residents and the public-at-large to experience them firsthand. In addition, by understanding the nature of each public space—whether it be processional, leisurely or reflective—stewards of the American postwar performing arts center can take appropriate measures to either preserve or redevelop them, based on past critical appraisals, thereby promoting their appreciation as distinctive works of the modern movement.

Non-durable materials require careful analysis as well, as climatic conditions and method of application figures heavily into their long-term survival. Having been implemented in an inhospitable environment, yet durable enough to withstand the elements if applied appropriately, Lincoln Center's Roman travertine marble demonstrates the many variables which can influence traditional materials used in modern building systems. A careful assessment of the material itself and its

application should enable the building's steward, working in conjunction with a skilled conservator, to determine the appropriate remedies. Subscribing to the preservation of a modern aesthetic can dramatically influence the conservation of these resources inasmuch as substitute materials may prove to be more compelling than ongoing, piecemeal repair.

Modern landscapes that have been deemed historic resources should be accorded the same respect as historic buildings, as dictated by the Secretary of Interior Standards. Like the issues confronting Dan Kiley's work at Lincoln Center, the future of modern landscapes can be dramatically hindered by a lack of institutional memory—crucial to both its preservation and any contemplated redevelopment—as well as by a lack of understanding on the part of its stewards to follow specific guidelines for its survival. In the event that it cannot be sustained or poses threats to adjacent infrastructure, substitute plantings and trees, which are similar in appearance and volume, should replace them.

Regarding proposals for new development and new additions, redevelopment efforts should focus on individual as well as overall character-defining features, and the extent to which new structures may impact these features. As stressed, by adhering to an expanded preservation criterion based on utility and intent, within the context of retaining character-defining elements, expansion needs may be addressed without compromising significance. In the case of public spaces, such as Lincoln Center Plaza North and Plaza South, which can support additional and non-compromising activities, reversible components, such as outdoor concessions or eateries, can stimulate activity while also promoting appreciation of existing modern designs.

All of these prescriptions for preservation and change require a modicum of protection which is afforded by state- and/or national- register eligibility and/or listings. As detailed for every American postwar performing arts center mentioned, urban renewal status; local, state or regional ownership; or proposals for capital projects, involving the use of federal funding, permits, licenses or approvals, all entail some form of Section 106-related review on either the federal or state level. Furthermore, this regulatory review can be potentially empowered by local designation which is even more exacting. Broadening state and federal guidelines to include utility and intent can be achieved through a Programmatic Agreement, which would emphasize functional needs, list character-defining features and emphasize the relevance of construction histories and critical assessments. As a compelling reference for redevelopment, this documentation can be equally effective in assessing programmatic value as it is to assess significance. Finding a consensus among construction narratives and critical assessments enables both preservation officers and stewards alike, identify deficiencies and strengths of these centers through objective analyses beyond competing agendas.

Finally, given the perpetually expanding nature of the American postwar performing arts center relative to its success as a thriving ensemble of cultural institutions, new development and additions, both on- or off-campus, should be encouraged to the extent that it does not obstruct vistas which inform its overall significance. Designed as cohesive ensembles, many of these campuses' distinctive sense of place are derived from their overall configurations and designs which are evocative of the postwar era. Disrupting these complexes with new development that

encroaches on their spatial relationships and monumentality will permanently destroy the essence of their founders and designers' aspirations.

Thus, in implementing an expanded criterion of program and intent, the American postwar performing arts center has the capacity to reconcile the conflict between preservation, maintenance and redevelopment, and consequently, operate more successfully in the 21st century than it has over the last half century.

AFTERWORD

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, have put many things in perspective—among them, the redevelopment issues at Lincoln Center. Severely criticized as being “detached from reality,” a *New York Times* editorial stated:

The infighting at Lincoln Center resembles the kind of insidious arguments that sometimes tear families apart. Nearly every aspect of the redevelopment plan—from basic questions of governance and veto power to architectural details and artistic hegemony—seems to be contested...This is the kind of disagreement that makes doing business harder than it needs to be and makes Lincoln Center look less like the commanding cultural institution it is and more like a collection of petty fiefs.¹

These accusations, alluding to the dysfunction which has transpired within the organization—and its ensuing aggravation by board executives who have resorted to dictatorial rather than democratic tactics—suggests a deeper problem with its structure that may not be rectifiable. Thus, the question becomes: How can this type of cultural conglomeration work if its members are fundamentally in competition with one another?

In a letter sent to the parent organization, Metropolitan Opera executives claimed that “Lincoln Center was contemplating a ‘user-friendly complex of additional buildings,’ whereas ‘we must insist that the first order of business be the critically needed refurbishing and maintenance of the constituents’ current operating facilities.’”² Reflecting deeper frustrations about the parent organization’s means of conducting business, the Metropolitan association presented a list of complaints.

Among them, was the execution of by-laws by the executive board of Lincoln Center, Inc. without a vote from the constituents; requests for large financial commitments from the constituents to the redevelopment project with no guarantee of project budget oversight; and the board executives decision to act as liaisons between the city and the constituents, without allowing its members direct communication with local officials.³ These offenses certainly defy the facilitating role that the Lincoln Center organization was established to fulfill. Instead, they suggest that the executives, having to constantly arbitrate between their constituents' demands, have chosen to act in a parental capacity—which may or may not be fitting for a parent organization.

Undeniably, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. does highly significant work through its non-profit mission of arts education and performance.⁴ In addition to its roles as developers, stewards and facilitators, it has been a presenter of educational programming, performances and special events. Its educational organization, Lincoln Center Institute, has been a model for using the arts as a teaching tool, reaching more than 2.5 million students since its inception in 1974, and 27 worldwide institutions a year, who use its educational models in their respective communities. Its Meet-the-Artist series provides outreach to more than 20,000 local schoolchildren a year who visit the center to see live performances and hear talks by its professional artists.

An extraordinary educational tool for reaching mass audiences, its "Live From Lincoln Center" broadcasts concerts and performances via television to more than 30 million viewers a year. Free live programming to the public is also part of the

organization's mission. Four free special events a year take place on its outdoor stages, including Lincoln Center Festival 2001, Midsummer Night Swing, Mostly Mozart Festival and Lincoln Center Out of Doors, drawing thousands of people to its park and plazas. Another program, the Department of Programs and Services for People with Disabilities, provides community accessibility and outreach of the performing arts to physically-challenged people of all ages. Several admission-based special programs include its Reel to Reel series, devoted to family entertainment; its Great Performers series, which includes pre-concert lectures and screenings; and its new American Songbook series, which celebrates the works of American popular composers and lyricists.

All of these major activities validate the work Lincoln Center, Inc. does as a charitable organization entrusted with a public mission. Yet, can its role as the parent organization to its diverse constituency be as easily validated? Confronted with the management of some of the world's most established and endowed cultural institutions, the parent organization has virtually insurmountable obstacles in reaching a consensus. Understandably, each constituent has its own donors and patrons to appease, making the parent organization's demands sometimes at odds with its constituent's constituent. However, these donor-patron demands are generally subordinated by the powerful personalities representing the institutions themselves, who comprise Lincoln Center, Inc.'s board. Commenting on the futility of the current organizational structure, Rita Hauser, board member of the New York Philharmonic

and of Lincoln Center, Inc., noted, “There is no central overall final control, that’s the problem. It’s a governance issue.”⁵

Perhaps the long-term solution is to relieve Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. of its “parental” duties altogether, and allow it to thrive solely as a non-profit organization that does charitable work. In its stead, a special Lincoln Center task force or development corporation could be formed under the joint authority of the city and state that would be entrusted with the complex’s ownership and oversight. Having already proved successful with the Times Square development of 42nd Street, and now being implemented to rebuild and revitalize Lower Manhattan, these entities can be powerful engines for civic progress. Furthermore, as public institutions, these entities are responsible for initiating the public review process as a means of protecting historic resources while, at the same time, helping to facilitate economic development.

As for Lincoln Center’s present constituency, each institution could be its own decision-making body, having the primary say in their own organization’s and facility’s destiny. Linked to a physical campus like tenants in a commercial space, each would continue to pay its share of building maintenance and common area charges to help maintain the park and plazas. Furthermore, in the event of any tenant conflicts, the task force or development corporation could serve as mediators, acting in a regulatory capacity that would promote cooperation and ensure public purpose.

Lincoln Center was a bold experiment on many levels and its monumental campus attests to the aspirations of its founders and designers to provide an exemplary model for performing arts consolidation. However, as an organizational

structure intent on accommodating the conflicting agendas of some of the world's most powerful cultural institutions, it was an experiment that failed. In addition, due to ever-expanding needs and the addition of new constituents over time, it is futile to expect that all parties will be accommodated within a centralized campus without permanently jeopardizing the historic integrity of its physical campus. It is for these reasons that these institutions should be allowed and even encouraged to expand away from its campus in an effort to continue their artistic missions. Free to act on their own volition, with or without the benefit of a centralized facility, these institutions can at last renounce an uneasy alliance and proclaim their independence.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Where Lincoln Center Stands," *The New York Times*, October 16, 2001, p.A22.
- ² Quoted in Ralph Blumenthal, "Met Opera Rejects Plan for Renovation Of Lincoln Center," *The New York Times*, January 24, 2001, p.B4.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ For further descriptions and statistical information on the parent organization's programming, see Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., *Lincoln Center Annual Report 2000-2001*, www.lc.org.
- ⁵ Quoted in Robin Pogrebin, "Mayor's Concern and a Departure Cloud the Lincoln Center's Project," *The New York Times*, January 3, 2002, p. B8.

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(www.altoonporter.com/projects/on_the_boards/grand_avenue)
3. Milwaukee Performing Arts Center. (M. Schmertz, "Architecture for the Arts of Music, Dance and Drama," *Architectural Record*, November 1969, 146:147)
4. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 261)
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11. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Ground-Breaking Ceremony, May 14, 1959. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 49)
12. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Ground-Breaking Ceremony; Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower with shovel. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 99)
13. Philharmonic Hall, now Avery Fisher Hall, Max Abramovitz (1962) (Courtesy Landmark West!)
14. New York State Theater & Lincoln Center Plaza, now Josie Robertson Plaza, Philip Johnson (1964) (Courtesy Landmark West!)
15. Metropolitan Opera House, Wallace K. Harrison (1969) (Courtesy Landmark West!)

16. The Juilliard School, Pietro Belluschi, Eduardo Catalano, Helge Westermann (1969)
(Courtesy Landmark West!)
17. Vivian Beaumont Theater, Eero Saarinen (1965) (Courtesy Landmark West!)
18. Library for the Performing Arts, Gordon Bunshaft. (1965) (Courtesy Landmark West!)
19. Columbia Exposition of 1892.
(<http://users.vnet.net/schulman/Columbian/columbia.html>)
20. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Metropolitan Opera House, center. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 261)
21. Josie Robertson Plaza, view toward New York State Theater and Metropolitan Opera House. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 250)
22. Unrealized mall, linking Lincoln Center to Central Park (Proposed, 1966). (V. Newhouse, *Wallace K. Harrison, Architect*, 1989, 191)
23. Paris Opera House, section. (J. Turner, *The Dictionary of Art*, 12:157)
24. Metropolitan Opera House, section. ("A House for Grand Opera," *Architectural Record*, September 1966, 140:150)
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26. Wallace K. Harrison proposal for Lincoln Center; Metropolitan Opera House, center (1959) (A. Rich, *The Lincoln Center Story*, 1984, 25)
27. Wallace K. Harrison proposal for Lincoln Center; Metropolitan Opera House, center (1960) (A. Rich, *The Lincoln Center Story*, 1984, 25)
28. Metropolitan Opera House. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 261)
29. Metropolitan Opera House Lobby Interior, promenade level. (Courtesy Landmark West!)
30. Metropolitan Opera House, plaza view of Marc Chagall's *Le Triomphe de Musique*. (author photo)
31. Metropolitan Opera House Lobby Interior, Intermission. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 261)
32. Grand Central Terminal, Warren & Wetmore 1911 Drawing. (J. Belle and M.R. Leighton, *Grand Central: Gateway to a Million Lives*, 2000, 144)
33. Grand Central Terminal, view east of Baggage Counter Room. (J. Belle and M.R. Leighton, *Grand Central: Gateway to a Million Lives*, 2000, 150)

34. Grand Central Terminal, view east of new staircases. (J. Belle and M.R. Leighton, *Grand Central: Gateway to a Million Lives*, 2000, 151)
35. Metropolitan Opera House forecourt, view north. (author photo)
36. Lincoln Center plan, with shaded rectangle showing area of proposed lobby expansion. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 141)
37. Lincoln Center, axonometric drawing. (Courtesy Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.)
38. Lincoln Center, Amsterdam Avenue, view north. (author photo)
39. Lincoln Center, Amsterdam Avenue, view south. (author photo)
40. West 65th Street, view west. (author photo)
41. Proposed West 65th Street, view west. (E. and F. Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2001, II:1)
42. Juilliard School. West 65th Street and Broadway, southeast corner. (author photo)
43. Juilliard School, entrance to Alice Tully Hall. West 65th Street and Broadway, southeast corner. (author photo)
44. Avery Fisher Hall, view northwest from Columbus Avenue, with grand staircase and service road in foreground.
45. New York State Theater, view northwest from service road at Columbus Avenue.
46. Proposed Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan.
47. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan detailing facilities and public area configurations. (E. and F. Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2001, II:28)
48. Josie Robertson Plaza & Avery Fisher Hall, Intermission. (E. Young, *Lincoln Center: The Building of an Institution*, 1980, 141)
49. Piazza del Campidoglio. (C. Moughtin, *Street and Square*, 1999, 110)
50. Proposed Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, plan. (E. and F. Eisenberg, "The Public's Stake in a Cultural Crossroads," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2001, II:28)
51. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view southwest. (Courtesy Landmark West!)
52. Vivian Beaumont Theater with Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure*, Lincoln Center Plaza North, view west. (Courtesy Landmark West!)
53. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view of Avery Fisher Hall western forecourt area.
54. Lincoln Center Plaza North, view southeast. (author photo)
55. Damrosch Park, view southwest. (Courtesy Landmark West!)

56. Lincoln Center Plaza South, view northeast with party tent in Damrosch Park in foreground.(author photo)
57. Metropolitan Opera House north façade fins with Vivian Beaumont Theater in foreground. (Courtesy Landmark West!)
58. Travertine Repairs. (author photo)
59. Cracks in travertine pavers. (author photo)
60. Cracks in travertine stairs. (author photo)
61. Concrete repair of travertine stair. (author photo)
62. Lincoln Center Plaza North with London plane trees. (Birnbaurm, ed., *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture*, 52)
63. Lincoln Center Plaza North with Bradford pear trees. (Birnbaurm, ed., *Preserving Modern Landscape Architecture*, 52)
64. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Zoning Map. (Bleyer, Blinder, Belle, *Lincoln Center Capital Needs Survey: Executive Summary (Draft)*, December 6, 1999, 3)
65. Samuel B. and David Rose Building and 3 Lincoln Center, view from Lincoln Center Plaza North. (author photo)
66. Church of the Good Shepherd, view south. (author photo)
67. Computer rendering of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall. (www.jazzatlincolncenter.org/jalc/facility/index.html)
68. Davis Brody Bond Architects proposal for World Trade Center Space Frame. (www.akersdesignrender.com/site_map.html)

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